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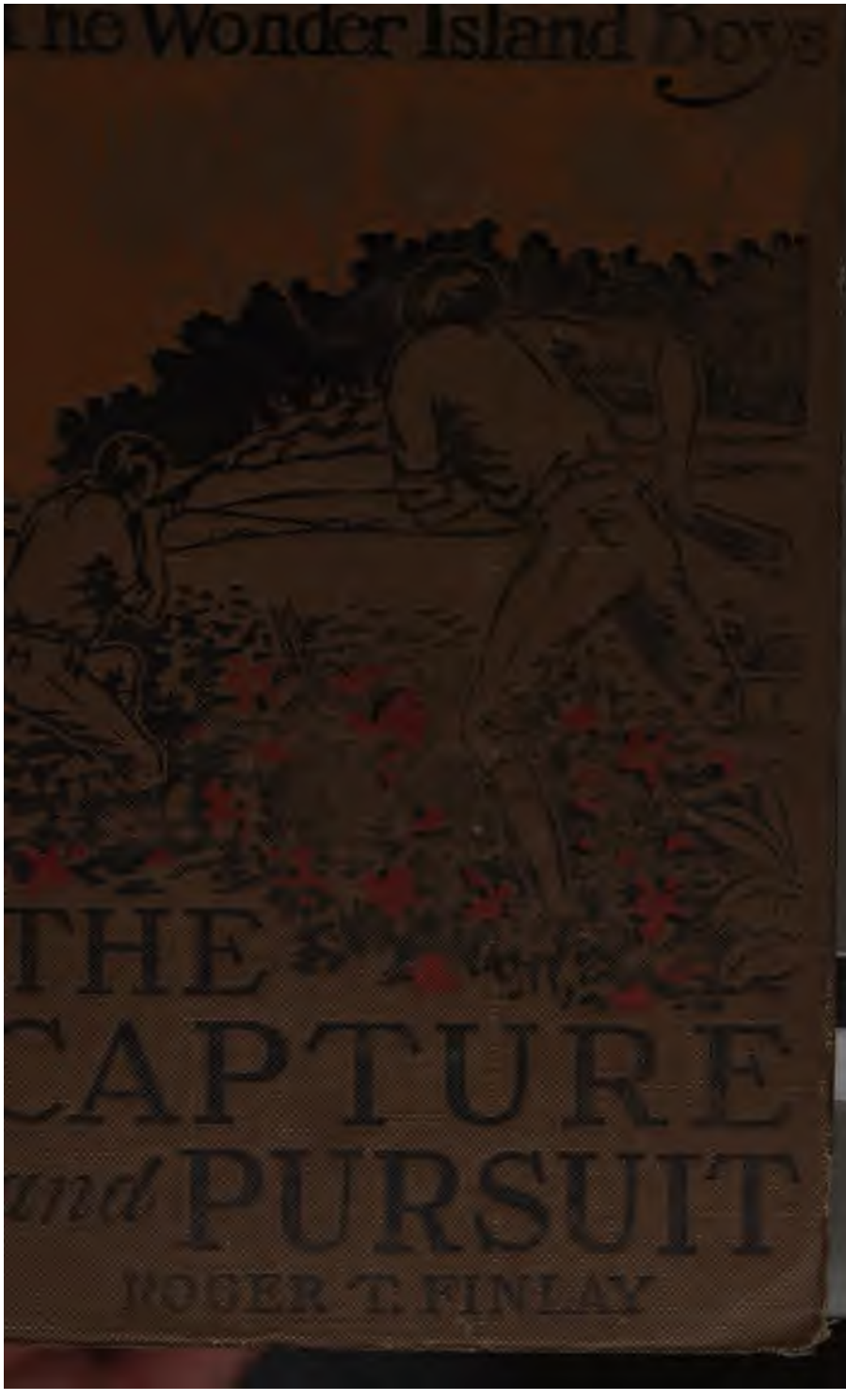
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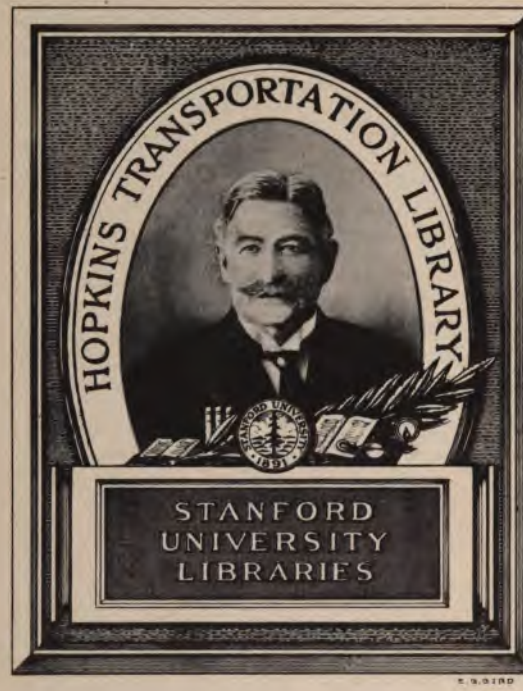

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THE WONDER ISLAND BOYS

CAPTURE AND PURSUIT

"The warriors approached unsuspectingly"

[See p. 53]

THE WONDER ISLAND BOYS

CAPTURE AND PURSUIT

BY

ROGER T. FINLAY

ILLUSTRATED

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CAPTURE AND PURSUIT

CHAPTER I

THE FIGHT AT THE SAVAGES' CAMP

The Professor, Harry and Tom were dumbfounded at the excited condition of Ralph, as he emerged from the wood and told them to reach the wagon as quickly as possible.

"Where are John and George?" asked the Professor, as all hurriedly ran to the rear.

"George had already gone forward to take his position, when we saw a large number of the savages appear to our left, and he asked me to tell you at once, while he went after George to inform him of the danger."

"It will not do to leave them in this way. Go back to the wagon and get all the guns ready, and I will remain here, so that at the first sign I may be ready to aid them. If we do not return for some time, or in the event you hear any firing, two of you must come to me with the reserve guns."

The boys hurried to the wagon, all the reserve weapons were taken out, and the ammunition put in order for instant use. They waited impatiently for the first sign which would be the signal to act, but fully a half hour passed, and, after consulting, it was decided that Ralph and Tom should go to the Professor at once, and take with

them four extra guns, leaving Harry, who knew most about the yaks and how to handle them in an emergency.

In order to make the situation clear, it will be necessary to make a digression from the story.

About fourteen months previous to the opening event of this chapter, an aged Professor and two of the boys, named George Mayfield and Harry Crandall, who were shipmates on the schoolship *Investigator,* were wrecked at sea, and stranded on an unknown shore. They were stripped of everything but their clothing, and of that had only a scanty supply.

Without tools of any sort, or any of the means to procure food or clothing, they did not despair, but set to work, in the most primitive way, to dig the different things from the earth, and to make clothing, tools and other requirements.

They found the various metals and vegetable products; constructed a water wheel; a sawmill; put up a small shop in which were installed the various tools, such as lathes, grindstone, drilling machines, and the like; a loom was eventually devised, to utilize the vegetable fibers, and by means of which clothing was provided.

During the work which necessities forced upon them, they were desirous of knowing something of the land which had received them, and several trips were made into the interior, during which time evidence was found of the existence of tribes of savages as neighbors, but could not learn definitely where they were located, nor had they any means of determining the number.

Fortunately, some yaks, a wild species of cattle, were captured, and these they turned to use by taking advantage of the milk of the animals, and also by utilizing the fur for making felt, as well as tanning the hides for footwear.

But one of the most important uses was in training them for work, and a wagon was built, which served in several trips into the interior.

During the excursions they learned of the existence of others who had been shipwrecked, and later discovered that one of the boats made in the early occupation of the island, and which was left by them in a large river, about ten miles to the south of their home, had been taken by some one, who had put different oars and a rope in the boat, which they discovered after it had been found. This, together with the finding of a lifeboat, companion to the one in which they were wrecked, was sufficient evidence that some of their fellow-voyagers were on the island, and this was confirmed when a message was found in the lifeboat, which stated that certain ones were captured by the savages.

Before they had an opportunity of making any exploring trips, the boys discovered a mysterious cavern, not far from their home, and this was explored, with the Professor, and they were startled to find the skeletons of a number of pirates who had inhabited the cave, and the position of the skeletons, and the weapons, showed conclusively that the entire band had been wiped out in a terrific fight.

In the caverns also were found the skeletons

of chained captives, the existence of a regular arsenal of weapons, and an immense hoard of treasures, which had been hidden within the recesses of the cave, for centuries.

Many mysterious things occurred to them, too long to relate, but all of them bearing on the things which interested them, and the first serious attempt to discover the savages, was to build a boat twenty feet long, equipped with a sail, and with this, and an ample supply of provisions on board, the course was directed to the northwest, and along the western coast.

During the three days' cruise, the weather was fair, but on the fourth day a terrible storm came up and drove them back around the northern point of land, and in the height of the storm they were cast ashore, and their boat wrecked, fully seventy miles from their home.

Just before being driven back by the storm, they had the first view of lights, which showed the location of the savages. They laboriously made their way home, and on returning found John, one of the present party, who suffered loss of memory, and had also an attack of aphasia, or inability to speak.

His full name was John L. Varney, and for two months did not utter a word, nor did he seem to recognize the existence of those around him. Singularly enough, he was a first-class mechanic, and during hunting trips showed himself to be expert, as well as in fishing, and did anything and everything which he had seen others engage in.

Together with John, the Professor and the two boys built a first-class wagon, and undertook a trip in the direction of the savages. In the meantime they made several guns, so that they had ten muzzle-loaders, which, while they took time to reload, were better than bows and arrows, that the boys had formerly made and used.

Several months after landing they captured a baby orang-outan. This had now grown to be strong and active, and as these animals have great imitative qualities, George undertook to educate it to do many things, and it succeeded, on its own initiative, in doing many mischievous tricks, which afforded amusement for all the party.

He was called Red Angel, or more commonly Angel, and as he had a wonderful instinct for scenting danger, was always taken on trips, and was with them on the first extended tour made with the new wagon. During that trip the two boys, Ralph Wharton and Tom Chambers, were rescued from the savages, and it was found that both boys were companions on the ill-fated *Investigator*, and were captured by several tribes of natives, after they had been on the island over nine months.

During this trip they had a half dozen fights with the natives, which so depleted their stock of ammunition that it compelled their retreat, and finally returned, with determination to manufacture a new lot of guns, and lay in an ample supply of ammunition.

After their return John's memory was restored, and he related his wonderful history, and together

the six set to work preparing the new equipment. This comprised twenty-five guns and two hundred and fifty rounds of ammunition. The wagon carried with it a portable fort which could be set up on one side of the wagon to protect the team of yaks, as well as themselves, and it was also so made as to serve as a float for enabling them to cross streams.

The particular reason for the present trip was not revenge, but to rescue the other boatload of their companions, and also some of the companions of John, who must be somewhere in the interior, unless sacrificed by the natives.

They were now on this trip, and had gone about twenty miles from home, and after crossing the South River, the day before, set out in the direction of the savages' village, which lay to the southwest.

Early in the morning of the day, after discovering a half dozen savages encamped less than a half mile away, it was determined to surprise and capture them, so as to afford a means whereby they might treat with the inhabitants.

While in the act of surrounding their camp, John discovered a band approaching from the southwest, so that he was compelled to notify the others of the danger, and Ralph was sent back hurriedly with the warning, as related.

As they approached the Professor, the latter held up a warning hand, and whispered: "I do not think John and George will be able to make their way back by the left, as the new band has just come in, and they are now all together, so

that if you will remain here I will go to the right. Await my coming, unless there should be firing, in which event go back to the wagon and prepare it to receive us."

Before he had taken a step a shot rang out, and the Professor continued: "Go at once and get the wagon ready."

The boys rushed back, and informed Harry, and the wagon was at once turned around into an advantageous position, the yaks unyoked, and the portable fort taken from the wagon and set up in position. The place selected was in the open, so as to compel the savages to travel over the open spaces before reaching the wagon.

In the meantime, let us see what John and George were doing. When John told Ralph to inform the others, he had seen the newly arriving warriors coming up slowly from the southwest, and as George had already gone on to take up his position to his left, he followed after him, and as he caught up, said:

"We cannot carry out our movement, as a number of savages are now coming up, and I have sent Ralph to warn the others. We must now make our way around the camp to the north, and then strike east. Move as quietly as possible, and follow me."

Before they had gone three hundred feet, John held up a warning hand. "There is another lot of them coming from the northwest. What does all this mean?"

Their only salvation now was to move directly

to the west, and this took them just the opposite direction from the wagon.

When the Professor left the boys he moved cautiously to the northwest, and before he had gone far saw the savages approaching from that quarter. As the band which John had advised them about, was coming in from the southwest, he was, for a time, mystified, but soon reached the conclusion that it must be a force not noticed by John, so he circled to the north, in wonder why John or George should have used the gun which they had just heard.

When George and John moved to the west, the band which they originally sighted, arrived in sight of the camp, and they at once changed the course to the south, and thus enabled them to make their way back to the wagon in that direction; but before the trail was reached, John said: "We must approach the trail cautiously, as there may be stragglers, or some who are following behind."

At that instant, two warriors crossed the path directly ahead of them, the brush being so close at this point that they could not see fifty feet ahead. The savages saw them instantly, and John held up his hand, as though to speak, but they did not wait to parley, and as one of them raised his spear to throw it, the other fitted an arrow to his bow, but before the spear left the native's hand, George drew his gun and fired.

The other savage did not wait to shoot, as he saw his companion fall, but bounded forward, in the direction of the camp. The shot, of course, aroused the entire camp, and it also accelerated

the movement of the tribe approaching from the northwest.

"Follow me quickly," whispered John. "Let us go south, and then make our way east."

In a short space of time the savages were at the scene of the shooting, and, as they had no means of knowing in which direction their enemies had gone, began the process of trailing. This was, necessarily, slow work, and it gave John and George time to make their way by a wide detour around to the wagon, to find that only Harry was there, but gratified to think that the precaution had been taken to erect the fort.

"Remain here, George, while I go forward to the Professor." As he said this he darted forward, and soon reached the position of Ralph and Tom, and the latter at once informed him of the direction the Professor had taken.

"Too bad, I am afraid he has fallen into the hands of the band which has just come in from the northwest."

This was, indeed, surprising news for the boys, but he did not wait for their comments.

"Do not wait for us long, but go back to the wagon. I do not intend to come back until I get the Professor," and he was away.

"I do not understand what to make of the different forces all concentrating at this point. There must be something up, sure."

John followed the direction the Professor had taken, making a wide detour to the north, and it was well he did so, as the savages, having lost the trail, were now in consternation at the condition of things. They knew the white men must be lurk-

ing somewhere near, but the direction was a mystery.

The search was continued by John for over a quarter of an hour, when a shot rang out in the direction of the wagon, and as he turned to go back, was gratified to see the Professor several hundred feet away, waving to him, and together they started for the wagon.

When Ralph and Tom returned to the wagon and reported the situation, they were all in great excitement. They had no doubt but the savages would, sooner or later, discover the trail left by John and George, and this would lead to the wagon. In this they were not mistaken, for while it took some time to trace out the tracks made by them, they soon reached the wagon, and, in fact, entered the clearing before they had an idea they were so near the whites.

Harry showed himself above the top of the fort, and the savages, unused at the sight of such a spectacle, stood in amazement. He held up his hand, as several of the savages fitted arrows to their bows, as a signal not to fight, and they withdrew a short distance in consultation.

"If they only knew it, we could plug them without any difficulty at this distance," remarked Harry. "What do you suppose they will attempt to do?"

"I only wish the Professor and John were here," answered George.

"They are going to fight, that is sure," observed Ralph.

"Let's make a big show, anyway," cried Harry. "Put a gun through each one of the portholes."

The fort had four portholes on each side, and a gun was thrust through each and balanced in position.

It now appeared that an enveloping movement was taking place on the part of the savages. After disappearing, they could be seen at different quarters, as they again approached.

Without a word of warning a shower of arrows came from all sides, and Harry cautioned them to be cool and shoot only when a distinctive mark could be seen.

All was quiet within the fort, until Harry said: "See that chief near the large tree? I will make a try for him." Carefully taking aim, he fired. This was the shot which John and the Professor heard.

They did not wait for any explanations. "I hope the boys are safe," the Professor remarked, as they hurried forward.

"They are no doubt at the wagon. I advised them to go there and not wait for us."

"Do you suppose that shot means they have discovered the wagon?"

"I have no doubt of it. They would be very stupid, indeed, not to be able to trace us, and that was the reason I admonished them to go to the wagon."

As they approached the savages could be seen skulking about to surround the wagon. "Well, Professor, I suppose we shall have to give them a little surprise?"

The Professor smiled, as they crawled up to get a close position. The tactics were now well understood by both, and that was to rush the

wagon from all sides, and thus hope, by overwhelming numbers, to succeed.

"The boys are pretty smart, after all," said the Professor, as he noted the guns at the portholes, and John could hardly refrain from bursting out in laughter at the sight.

At a signal the savages sprang forward, and there was a volley from the fort. "Brave boys," exclaimed John. "Shall we take a hand?"

"It would do me good to do so; but would it not be better to wait for the next movement on their part. That shot staggered them."

It was too apparent that the savages had not counted on such a disastrous result of the charge; but they were determined now. As they were springing forward, and before those in the fort had delivered the second volley, the Professor quietly said: "I think we can risk it now."

Both fired at the same instant, and two of the warriors fell. The attack from the new quarter dumbfounded them. Neither John nor the Professor appeared in the opening, but reloaded as rapidly as possible, and while the boys were immeasurably surprised, kept their wits, and at the order of George, fired a second volley.

This was too much for the natives, and they scampered from the vicinity of the wagon, and away from their lurking enemies. John and the Professor deliberately walked over the intervening space, as the boys cheered them.

The result of the shots, for ten in all had been fired, were four dead and four wounded, two of them so severely that they were unable to move.

"When George reached the limb which Angel occupied, the latter was jubilant in his expressions of pleasure"

[See p. 33]

CHAPTER II

THE RECONNOITERING SEAT IN THE TREE

From the position of the wagon it was impossible to see very far beyond the clearing, and they had no means of knowing how far the attacking party had gone. The first step of the Professor was to bring in the two severely wounded men, and administer to them.

One was found to be beyond hope, but the other did not appear to be struck in a vital spot. The other two, less severely wounded, were brought up and made comfortable outside of the fort, and so arranged that any attack of their enemies would bring them within line of the arrows.

The proceeding to dress the wounds was looked at in astonishment by the three unfortunates. They did not expect such care from their enemies. It was not their way. As soon as they had been made comfortable, John proceeded to interrogate them, to the best of his ability.

They could understand some words, and slowly the facts were brought out. In substance, the savages had knowledge of the existence of the white people on the island, and had by some means learned the location. When the Professor and the boys landed the first home built was near the landing place, but it was unsuited to their needs, as fresh water was not obtainable.

After some time they discovered a small stream,

which they eventually christened Cataract River, because they located their permanent home at a cataract about a quarter of a mile from the sea, and it was at this place that they put up the water wheel, and erected the workshop.

From John's interpretations of the captives' stories, all the savage tribes were now aware of the existence of the colony, and of the fights which had taken place near West River, but there was not sufficient cohesion among the different tribes, to form a bond of unity, so that two of the most powerful, or warlike, tribes had finally joined hands, and this accounted for the appearance of the bands from two different sources.

"I notice," said the Professor, "that the headdresses worn by these people are different from any that we have yet come into contact with. Do you think you could draw from them any information which would enable us to determine whether the Chief's tribe has joined them?"

"That is just what I have been trying to discover," replied John. "I endeavored to describe the tribe by the location, but, as you may have noticed, we do not get along very brilliantly. The two that George and I met this afternoon were from a tribe that I know of; but this fellow here belongs to an entirely different people."

The Professor turning to Harry said: "You will notice that the headdress of this one is similar to those we took from the first one shot in the second day's fight. Under the circumstances we have definite knowledge of at least five tribes."

"I will try to get some idea as to the number

they have," and turning to the more intelligent of the two, he tried to make himself understood, but at best it was only indefinite, as to numbers.

The characteristic feature of one of the head-dresses was the curly hair, and this indicated that the enemy of that tribe was to the west, and clearly pointed out that neither of the two bands attacking them were the captors of Ralph and Tom.

"I am going to ask them the name of the tribe from which the hair was taken," and pointing at the black curly hair, the captive pronounced the name "Tuolo." This was instantly recognized by Tom, although he could not before that time recall the proper word.

"He says the name of his tribe is 'Kurabu,' and those from the south are the 'Saboros.' It would be well to remember those names, as it may come in handy hereafter. I suppose Ralph and Tom will have no trouble in recognizing the Tuolos."

"For my part," said Harry, "the people who sport the dark-brown hair in this fellows' head-piece will be recognized by me from this time on, the Saboros, because they are the first ones who attacked us."

This was really the case, so that it was obvious that the two tribes who had attacked them were not the ones they had the former battles with, and things began to assume a very grave aspect.

The chief referred to by John, in the former conversation, was wounded by them and captured in their former trip, and after his wounded legs had healed, had left them, and returned to his

tribe, much to their regret. They had treated him handsomely, and grew to like him, as he showed many desirable traits. He belonged to the particular faction which had captured John, and was recognized by him when memory returned, and they had hoped that he would not forget them.

The serious aspect of the case was, that the Chief had not returned, nor was there any evidence that he was grateful for the interest which was taken in him.

The captives were constantly under guard, and provided with food, but during the entire night three kept guard constantly, to see that they did not communicate with each other.

The savages were entirely out of sight, and there was no indication that they were in the vicinity, and past midnight, John silently stole from the wagon and made his way across the clearing. He was absent more than an hour, until all began to be alarmed, but his return was so quiet that he was almost at the wagon before he was observed.

"What have you learned?" was the Professor's eager question.

"They are still guarding our camp, and intend to fight it out, if my observations are of any value. It is my opinion that they are waiting for the appearance of additional warriors. In any event, we must prepare for the fight of our lives."

Before morning came one of the wounded savages died, thus leaving three still on their hands, and it began to be a problem what to do in this emergency. They now knew, undoubtedly, where the Cataract home was, and the boys worried be-

cause they did not want them to destroy that, and while the siege was in progress some of the band might go there and wreck it.

"This is a situation which demands our most careful consideration," said the Professor, gravely. "We have considerable at stake, and may be able to keep them interested here, and probably in time get them to understand what our intentions are."

John and the Professor debated the matter during the entire night, except when John was on the scouting trip, and during such little snatches of sleep as they were able to take. There appeared to be nothing to do but to resist to the utmost of their power, and all felt able to do this successfully, unless something unforeseen should intervene.

When the gray light began to show in the east, George was busy preparing the morning meal, and it was fully eight o'clock before the savages showed themselves for the first time. They were seen on all sides of the wagon, but at distances out of gunshot range.

John again had an interview with the captives, and endeavored to make them understand that they did not wish to attack them, and had no hostile intentions; but all efforts of that character were soon found to be fruitless.

The day wore on, and no attack was made. They undoubtedly saw the disposition which had been made of the three captives, and this, unquestionably, deterred them from making an attack.

"What shall we do after to-morrow for water?

We have only enough to last us and the yaks for about twenty-four hours more," asked Harry.

"How far is it to the river?" asked George. The Professor and John both judged the distance to be less than a half mile.

They all looked at each other, and read the import of the question in each other's eyes. Should they make a fight to reach the river? With water they could defy the natives. It was a conclusion reached after a great deal of speculation.

When night came, and quiet again settled down, preparations were made for the transport of the wagon to the river. It was fortunate that the moon was not shining, but the night was clear, and this added some danger to the situation. At midnight, the yaks were unhitched, and the section nearest the forward end of the wagon pushed aside to permit them to pass through.

When they were yoked up, two of the captives were tied to the seat on the tailboard, and the top covering of the wagon raised sufficiently to enable them to manipulate the guns. The fort sections were secured in place, and quietly the wagon went forward.

They were as secure in the wagon as they had been in the fort, and the only danger was to the team, which might be struck by arrows, or they might be shrewd enough to aim at the animals, and thus prevent further progress.

"I fear," said John, "that we shall have difficulty in guiding the animals through the brush, and I will lead them."

This proposal was opposed by all, and he re-

luctantly consented to remain in the wagon. "I know," answered Harry, "that I can see well enough to get us safely through, and it will be better to go slowly than to take such a big risk."

The march began, and to their surprise, it was not answered by a shout or a shot. The savages had disappeared entirely. But before they had proceeded a quarter of a mile, the shouts and answering cries of the savages could be plainly heard.

"We have, unaccountably, gotten through their guard," cried John, as he leaped from the wagon. "Follow me as fast as you can." He sprang in front of the yaks to direct the way, and Harry urged the team forward as fast as the nature of the ground would permit, following closely on the heels of John.

The demons were coming on now in earnest, and could not be far behind, and they must have gone fully a half mile, with no river in sight. Suddenly John reappeared at the side of the wagon, and said: "Drive to the left for the open space. There is a brook there, and it will suit us just as well as the river."

The wagon was rushed to the open space, and down to the little stream which came from the southwest. Without hesitating a moment John ordered the fort sections to be replaced, and heeding the practice lessons which they had exercised over and over again, before starting out, they were prepared, in less than three minutes, for the foe.

The besiegers again surrounded them, but evi-

dently feared to attack. The first care of Harry was to provide the animals with fresh water. The two captives were again placed outside of the fort in a position where they could be easily guarded.

While so disposing the prisoners, George picked up a trinket that had fallen from one of them, who tried to recover it. It was a blue stone, and he noticed that the other prisoner also carried a stone of the same character. Each had a groove midway between the ends, to receive the cord which held it in place.

"What do you suppose they carry these things for?" asked George, as he exhibited the stone.

"They use them to ward off evil. It is remarkable," answered the Professor, "that the Hindoos consider the turquoise as a sure guard against sudden or violent death."

"That also reminds me," said John, "that the belief is a common one throughout all Asiatic countries. Even at the present time almost all Russian officers wear the turquoise as a talisman against fate."

"What is meant by talisman?"

"In all Oriental countries a figure cut in stone, metal, or any other material, and which, when made with particular ceremonies and under peculiar astrological circumstances, is supposed to possess certain virtues, but chiefly that of averting disease. Most savage tribes have some sort of charms or objects which are held in reverence, and the stone before you is a sample of this belief in the most remote parts of the world."

"What do you think he will do if I fail to give

it back to him? He made a fight for it when I picked it up."

"No doubt, he will think it is all over with him. We may be able to use the stone advantageously," remarked John, as he held out his hand. George passed it to him with a smile. He had not thought of that.

There was no sleep the rest of the night. The excitement was too intense. To the boys it was a period of experience they never forgot. The position was excellently chosen, although it was hurriedly done. The stream was only twenty feet away, and water was thus available whenever needed.

The savages understood this move beyond question; when the morning broke, the clear spaces up and down the stream, afforded no lurking places, and within ten feet of the end of the wagon was a tall juniper tree, the branches of which were within ten feet of the ground.

Occasionally only could a warrior be seen, skulking from one point to the next, but beyond that there was nothing to give any indication of the number they had to contend with.

Nearly the entire forenoon passed without any action on the part of the besiegers. Angel had kept closely within the enclosure, but now he spied the juniper tree, and it was not long before his native instinct to climb, got the better of him, and he bounded over the side of the fort, and gracefully swung upwardly from branch to branch.

He then proceeded to do something that the boys had never witnessed before. These animals

make seats from the boughs of the trees, and construct them so deftly that in a few moments will have a most comfortable chair. In their native state this has often been noticed by travelers.

Angel started to do this as soon as he had landed at the highest point. Ralph and Tom were very much interested in him from the first and when the seat-weaving operation began, Tom cried out: "Watch Angel; what is he doing? Look at him breaking the branches and twisting them!"

It was a curious sight to the other boys, as well.

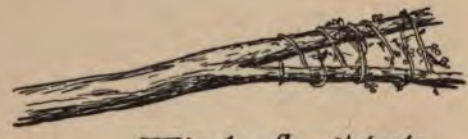


Fig. 1. Angel's Seat.

When the seat was ready, he settled himself in place, with all the ease imaginable.

George, whose particular pet Angel had always been, jumped with delight. "Why wouldn't that be a good place from which to watch the savages?"

Without another word, he was over the side wall, after strapping the gun to his back, and the rough bark gave him sufficient hold to make his way upwardly toward Angel, who, in the meantime, at the sight of George, began his peculiar chuckling sound that always indicated pleasure.

When George reached the limb which Angel occupied the latter was jubilant in his expressions of pleasure; and then the animal did another thing

which amused all of the watchers. The moment George had seated himself on the limb Angel left the seat and moved farther out.

George kept on talking, and Angel again moved to the seat and sat down momentarily, and then left it as before, and this was repeated several times. The Professor called up: "Don't you see he is offering you his chair?" and all burst into laughter.

George took the hint at once, and as soon as he was in position the action of Angel showed only too plainly that he was pleased at the acceptance of the invitation, and proceeded immediately to build another seat. This gave George an opportunity to learn the method by which the animals intuitively acquire the well-known art, which is unique, even in the monkey tribe.

CHAPTER III

THE MIDNIGHT RETURN TO DEFEND CATARACT

This little incident afforded only momentary relaxation to the tension caused by their surroundings.

"What can you see?" asked John.

"I can see them all," he answered, "and they know it. I imagine Angel and his gun was a big surprise to them."

Some months previous to the start on this trip, Angel was seen practicing with an imaginary gun, darting to and fro, as though sighting and eluding enemies, as he had seen the boys do, and his antics were so amusing, that George made a gun, which was presented to him.

Its possession was an infinite source of delight to him, and he was never without it in his hands, and the surprising thing was, it did not in any way interfere with his climbing of trees. To show how highly developed were his imitative qualities, it will be remembered that a number of extra guns were made, and when either went on a trip which was hazardous two guns were always taken along, one of which was strapped to the back.

This was noticed by him, and he tried in several ways, which were perceived by George, to supply this deficiency in his gun equipment; so that a strap was given him, and fitted to the gun, and with the new arrangement of his weapon, he

would take off the gun and put it back again, and chuckle while doing it.

When George climbed the tree his gun was strapped on, and Angel strapped on his, and as soon as the new seat was made, and George was ready to view the surroundings, he took the gun from his back, and Angel did likewise.

This act, as afterwards learned from the savages, had the most remarkable impression on them. They knew the orang, and all his ways, but here was one of them, possessed of a gun, and to all intents as able to use it as the white man beside him in the tree. Of course, they had no means of knowing that Angel's gun was merely an imitation of the real article.

"Count them, if you can. It will be interesting to know how many we are up against," said Harry.

George scanned the field to the southeast, so as to take in all those on the same side of the river on which they were encamped. "I can see forty-two. Now let us see how many are on the other side." In a few moments he continued: "There are only thirty."

"Can you distinguish," asked John, "whether all of the same tribe are on this side, or are the two peoples mixed up, some on one side, and some on the other?"

"I shall have to study that for a little. They are hiding now, so it is difficult to get a good look. I have seen only three, so far, with distinctive clearness, to be able to judge, but I think the Kurabus are on our side of the stream."

"I am glad to know that," continued John. "It

is a good indication that they are not any too friendly with each other." Then, calling up to George, he added: "Be very particular to look up and down stream, and tell me if you see any crossing and recrossing."

The boys did not question John's motives in giving George those injunctions.

"Would there by any objection if I should go up the tree and stay with George?" asked Ralph.

"Not in the least," answered the Professor, and John gave a smiling assent to the question.

"While I am about it, I might as well take a rope along, so we can have a more easy way to get up."

"Splendid idea," responded John, "and before you go let me make a sailor's ladder, which you can loop over the first limb, and thus make an easy route for our scouts." So saying, he neatly tied and knotted the rope, and Ralph leaped over the fort, and had no trouble in making his way to the first limb, and after he had secured the rope ladder, ascended to the limb which George and Angel occupied.

The arrival of Ralph was another occasion for the peculiar chuckle on the part of Angel, and before Ralph arrived, Angel was off his seat, and began the weaving act for an additional seat, and he worked so rapidly that by the time Ralph came up the seat was ready.

George heartily welcomed Ralph. They were chums, just as Harry and Tom had grown to be particularly fond of each other.

It was now an easy matter to gain access to the tree; but John still facilitated this, when he suggested that the wagon be drawn over to the tree, and as the low top of the wagon was over eight feet high, there was no more trouble to ascend the tree than to get over the fort.

As the day passed the watchers in the top kept a sharp lookout for signs of communication between the tribes on the opposite sides of the river.

One of the savages first wounded began to show alarming symptoms and, as the Professor stated, there was every indication of blood poisoning, which was indicated by the high fever. Before evening the symptoms became more pronounced.

The bullet wound was near the hip, and in making the examination was found to be very much inflamed. George was present, and inquired: "What is it that causes the inflammation?"

"The local inflammation near the wound is produced by the tissues absorbing blood in excess, and the result is that the vessels containing the blood are so modi-

Fig. 2.

fied as to permit an unusually large amount of the watery portion of the blood to pass through the walls of the veins and arteries. This entirely disorganizes the orderly manner of carrying out the function of the blood, and it is shown by the high fever and redness exhibited."

"Is that the same as blood poisoning?"

"That is quite a different matter. This man has what is called septic fever, which is produced by an infection of the system from bacterial germs, which were produced by the wound, so that the blood carried the germs throughout the body, and produced what is called a toxic condition. Toxic means poison, or poisoned state. When the blood is thus affected it is unable to do its proper duty, and a high heat is produced within."

"But why is it that he has chills and then a fever?"

"During the time that the fever is rising the heat produced exceeds the heat lost. If the rise is very rapid, as in this case, the blood is withdrawn from the skin, and this withdrawal diminishes the loss of heat, which gives rise to a cold sensation or chill, and is combined, very frequently, with an attack of shivering."

It was not considered advisable for either of the boys to remain in the tree during the night, and as soon as it was dark Tom and Harry, who were then on watch, descended, and preparations were made for the night watch.

Shortly after midnight, John took only one of the guns, and also selecting one of the bows, and

several arrows, from those which were taken from the wounded captives, started out on a tour of investigation.

In an hour a series of shouts and cries disturbed the silent night. It was the cry of the warriors on the north side of the stream.

Harry, who was one of the watchers with Tom, called to his companion: "Did you hear that? I wonder if John is in trouble?" The sounds were repeated, and finally reechoed by those on the south side of the river. Everything seemed to be confusion, and the sound of tramping feet in the distance became plain.

The Professor was wakened, and the situation explained. "Hasn't John returned? How long has he been away? Which direction did he take?" The questions were hurriedly asked, and when the boys stated that he had disappeared in the direction that the sounds came from, the matter took on a very much more serious aspect.

All crowded around the Professor, and one suggestion after the other was made, first as to the cause of the uproar, and then as to the condition of John.

"It is evident that the cause of the alarm comes through John, but how he has caused the difficulty, or what his motive is, I do not know. I cannot advise any of you to put yourselves in danger at this time."

The tumult increased, and it appeared that the sounds moved near to the stream north of their position. While thus speculating Harry noticed a movement close to the clearing and near the

fringe, along the stream. It was some one stealthily crawling along, and coming toward the wagon.

"Shall I fire?" asked Tom. The Professor held up a restraining hand. "Wait until we see what the object is."

Coming nearer, a savage was plainly seen with his distinctive headdress, and he was now within thirty feet of the wagon. The boys were shocked to see John's gun strapped on the warrior's shoulder, as he carried a bow in one hand. A few feet farther and he stood up, and held up an outstretched hand, and uttered the words: "Keep quiet."

It was John.

The relief almost caused a shout; but they remembered the injunction, and restrained themselves. In a moment more he was in the wagon; and the inevitable questions began.

"Where had he gone? What was the trouble in the camps?" and many others of like import were hurled at him.

"Let me tell the story in my own way," he finally replied. "I had my reasons for believing that not the best fellowship existed between our besiegers, and that was the reason I asked George to keep a sharp lookout to see whether they intermingled during the day.

"When I left the wagon I took with me the headdress of the savage on the other side of the wagon, one of the Saboros, and also the bow and arrows. I approached the Kurabus on the other side, and after stalking one of their sentries, I shot him with the arrow, which also belonged to the same

tribe—the Saboros; the shot merely disabled him temporarily, and he gave the alarm, as I knew he would.

"I purposely dropped my headdress near his body, and seized his—the one I now have, together with his bow and arrows, and stole away. I remained in the near vicinity until the cries of the wounded man brought his friends, and there were the telltale Saboro arrow and headdress, and believing that the work was one of their confederates on the other side of the river, the general alarm was given, which resulted in the first cries you heard.

"I had just crossed the stream, when the first of the Saboros came up, and he was no doubt one of the scouts of their party. Taking the first advantage, and before the main portion of the warriors came up, I shot the one nearest me with the arrow I had taken from the Kurabus, and stunned him into insensibility as he fell, and I dragged his body up to within seventy-five feet of the wagon."

The boys looked admiringly at John.

"They will have some time in explaining the mystery. One of the tribe on the other side was shot, and one of the savages on this side is missing. Each will blame the other, and we may expect some lively times in the morning."

John was right, for when morning broke, and before either of the boys could make his way to the treetop, there was an unusual commotion among the savages. Harry and Tom were up in

the tree without a moment's loss of time, and the uproar was apparent to them at once.

"They are after each other. The Kurabus are about to attack the Saboros. Shall we take a hand?" cried Tom.

"By no means," responded the Professor. "Let us know just what they are doing."

Those in the wagon could now see the Kurabus cross the stream. They were numerically stronger than the Saboros, and there was now an opportunity to witness the tactics of the savages.

John could not resist the opportunity of going up into the tree to witness the combat. The attacking party skulked forward, after crossing, and dodged from tree to tree, and as fast as an advance was made the smaller party retreated, and took up position in a strong line of bush, well within sight of the tree.

A volley of arrows was the first signal for attack, and this was answered, the parties now being close enough to enable them to do some execution. The attacking party first scattered out in a line, and the Saboros immediately advanced with a rush, for the center of the position held by their enemies.

"That was a shrewd move on the part of the Saboros. See the scattered fellows trying to get away." They were plainly being driven toward the direction of the wagon, but before reaching the stream near the wagon, crossed, and the Saboros now rushed after, attacking with their spears as they ran.

The Kurabus retreated to the northeast, as they

were now cut off from going southwest along the line of the stream, and part of their force was plainly visible to the left and in the rear of the victorious party. Within an hour they saw the last of the pursuers disappearing to the northeast.

This unexpected turn to the affairs, was received with jubilant shouts from those in the treetop, when they announced the result of the fight.

Just as they were descending, Ralph, who was the last to go down, cried out: "Wait, look to the south. More of them, and they are coming directly toward us."

John saw them, and returned to his position, calling out to those below: "Keep quiet, and do not respond to the attack. They belong to the defeated party. Undoubtedly, a part of their band."

The shouts of the boys, so incautiously given, startled the oncoming savages, and they stopped. From their position it was impossible to see the wagon, and they did not notice the watchers in the trees.

After a moment's halt they again came forward, and as they appeared at the clearing, caught sight of the peculiar fort structure in their way, and also saw the captives on the ground. For a moment there was consternation among them.

"I can see thirty of them, and if they go around us they will come on the trail of the party to the north, and probably will discover what has happened to them," said John.

They were now close enough to be within range of the guns. In fact, they were near enough to use their arrows effectively, if the whites had exposed themselves. The Professor raised himself above the fort, and motioned to them, in the hope that it would cause them to desist from any further attack.

At the same time he pointed to the north, and at this motion, they drew back, and John reported that the band was making a circle around to the left. They had understood the motion, as it appeared, and, in accordance with the expectations of John and the Professor, the battle on the brink of the stream, and the discovery of the wounded, was sufficient to give them the information that their friends were being driven to the north by their late allies.

The Kurabus quickly learned from their wounded friend, the status of the quarrel, and there was a long consultation, before any action was taken.

"We do not seem to be making much headway in getting intimately acquainted with our friends on the island. We have only two things open to us. One is to proceed to the southwest, and meet the tribes living there, or to follow up the warring parties, and endeavor to establish relations with them in some manner," was the Professor's view of the situation.

At this juncture John descended from the tree. "I am of the opinion that the newly arrived band will follow up and try to aid their friends. The serious thing to my mind is, the thought that as

they now know our location at the Cataract, one or the other party will go there and destroy everything."

"Can you make out enough from the fellows' answers outside to assure yourself that they were on their way to attack us there?"

"I am convinced of that," answered John.

"I think it is our duty to return there at once," was the Professor's reply.

There was a unanimous assent to this proposal. It was now about ten o'clock, and George, in the treetop, called down: "They are going to the northeast."

"Just as I expected. Keep a watch on them until they disappear, and in the meantime let us get the wagon ready."

Tom descended to aid in the work, and the fort sections were put into place on the wagon, the yaks yoked on, and the two savages put aboard.

"They have gone, and are after their friends as fast as they can travel," said George, as he descended, and took the rope off the last limb.

The team was directed due north, and it was a gratifying surprise to find that they were less than a quarter of a mile from the South River. The fort sections were applied at once, and without mishap the wagon was floated across, so that temporarily, at least, they were free from the savages.

CHAPTER IV

THE ATTACK ON CATARACT

"Now, let us drive through the forest and go directly north until we come within sight of the sea, then follow that along to the east, and if there is a meeting between the two hostile parties it will delay the victorious side long enough to permit us to get there ahead of them."

This suggestion was considered a wise solution, as that route was well known to them, and it also kept them out of any possible path that the savages might take to reach the Cataract house.

"Drive them up as fast as possible, Harry. We cannot afford to consider the animals now." John and Tom took up the lead to point out the most desirable trails, and it kept them both moving at a lively rate.

After they had gone about four miles, Ralph ran forward and insisted that he and George would take up the advance, and prevailed on John and Tom to take their places in the wagon. The distance chosen was farther than by a direct route to the northeast, but they could not afford to be again thrown into the paths of the conflicting tribes.

The Cataract River was crossed, which they knew was about ten miles from the home at the Cataract, and after the yaks had rested a few moments the flight was continued, and within an hour

and a half could see Observation Hill, and a little beyond the position was such that a more or less clear view could be obtained of the region directly south of the Cataract.

Ralph, whose eyesight was particularly good, climbed a tree, in the most advantageous position, and surveyed the south and southeast. "I cannot see a sign of them anywhere in the direction of South River."

"Then it is reasonably sure the last band has caught up, and they may possibly be having their argument to settle the supremacy," responded John.

But they still had several hours' hard travel before them, because the country was now more hilly and difficult through which to move the wagon. As they approached near to their home the team was driven close to the sea, and at the first easy descent the yaks were urged down to the narrow beach which lined the shore for the last two miles of the journey.

"Harry, you and Tom take charge of the team, and we will remain on the upland and follow along, so that we may watch for any signs of them coming across the hills."

The Professor's injunction was followed without a word. The traveling was good on the beach, and before long the team came to the mouth of the river, and, hiding behind the shelter of the hills, awaited the appearance of the rest of the party.

As they came up John hurriedly said: "Let us cross the stream here, while we have the oppor-

tunity, and we can approach the house in the shelter of the cliffs for a part of the way at least."

The raft sections were at once applied, and the entire party floated across, much relieved to find they were home before any signs were noticed of either attacking party.

The cattle were still there, and everything about the premises showed that there had been no disturbance during the absence.

"I suggest," was John's first proposal, "that we conceal the wagon, and take our places in the main house. This will give them the idea that we have not returned, and will put some of them, at least, within our power."

The wagon was run behind the shop, so they could not see it by any possible approach that might be made in attacking.

Their home consisted of one main building, containing four rooms, adjoining the original structure which had three smaller rooms. Distant from this, and less than fifty feet away was the shop and laboratory, adjoining the Cataract itself, and at one end of the shop was the sawmill. Below the shop was the rough building put up for the cattle, and adjoining this was a shed designated as the boathouse, and within which were the original boat they made, together with the lifeboat which was found on South River, and also the wrecked after part of their lifeboat.

"If I could only make the captive we have understand the subject a little better, we might still be in a position to get on treaty terms with the devils, but he seems to be too dense to understand

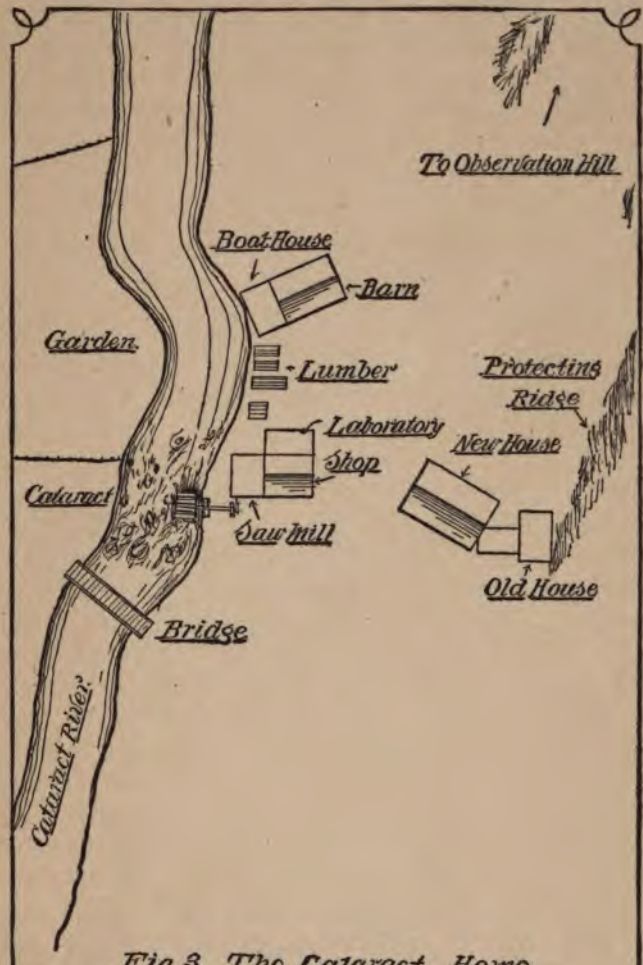


Fig. 3. The Cataract Home.

WONDER ISLAND.

my meaning." But nevertheless John worked with him hour after hour, and the savage was not now loth to make himself more agreeable.

It was nearing five o'clock, and still no signs of either of the tribes. It might be possible they would not come, after all. A watch was kept up all night, two taking their turns every two hours, as all were tired from the two days' exertions.

Morning appeared, and still there was nothing to indicate the intention of the natives to visit them. John had discovered that the Saboros learned of their existence from a neighboring tribe, and had joined forces with the Kurabus, who were also contemplating an expedition against them.

He also succeeded in drawing from him that the two tribes had not been on the best of terms, and was not surprised at the turn of affairs, and of course John did not explain the cause of the quarrel and fight in the forest. All hoped the Saboros would win in the fight, as the ability of John and the savage to make each understood might be the means of making friends of them.

Angel was in his glory again. He romped about careless and free. Enemies did not seem to trouble him. George almost hugged him, as he spoke of the hint which he had so opportunely given in climbing the tree.

The Professor smiled at the remembrance, as he said: "That might be called the 'tree of life' in our case. It has been said that trees and wood saved the world twice."

"How?" asked several of the boys in concert.

"John Evelyn said, 'Trees and woods have twice saved the world, first by the Ark, then by the cross; making full amends for the evil fruit of the tree in Paradise, by that which was borne on the tree at Golgotha.'"

The appointments of the house curiously interested the savages, and they were the more astonished when the evening meal was set before them. Shortly after the meal the cocoanut-oil lamps were brought out by George, but their use was forbidden, as it would not be prudent to illuminate the place.

When the savage saw the oil he was interested at once, and John, who was ever on the alert to notice any of his actions, quietly requested George to give him some of it.

To the surprise of all, the savage put it on his face, and rubbed it in with considerable satisfaction. The boys looked at John inquiringly. "Does that surprise you?" he asked. "Do you know that savage is doing just what they were accustomed to do in Biblical times?"

"Do you mean," asked Ralph, "that he was anointing himself?"

"Not exactly that, but he was doing what started the custom of covering the body with oil?"

"What was it done for originally?"

"Simply as a matter of health and comfort. Many tribes and peoples, civilized, as well as those lower in the scale, acquired the habit, using oils of various kinds, which prevented insects from attacking them. There are many plants which contain oils obnoxious, and some which are deadly, to animal pests, hence they were by this means

freed from vermin; and in tropical countries all kinds abound.

"Later on the habit of anointing with oil took on a wider meaning. In a religious sense anyone consecrated with oil was set apart for a divine mission, and the more costly the oil the greater the degree of virtue imparted. Oil for the sanctuary was mixed with myrrh, cinnamon, calamus and cassia, as stated in Exodus, and, singularly, all these are obnoxious to insects."

It will be remembered that among other things which were found in their investigations was the clove tree, and from this an extract had been made. The Professor looked at the savage approvingly, and immediately went to the laboratory, bringing a small bottle of the extract, and adding a quantity to the oil.

The savage was surprised and delighted at the perfume, and it was a proof, beyond question, that he understood its use in the sense that John had explained.

During the entire night a careful watch was again kept up, and all began to feel that their hurried retreat was an unnecessary precaution, but before the sun was up an hour, Harry, who was the early lookout, announced that they were in sight, and all hurriedly took positions, where they were concealed, and anxiously awaited their coming.

"Can you make out which tribe is after us?" asked the Professor.

"They are still too far off for me; possibly Ralph can distinguish them."

"No; but they look more like the Saboros."

"I am glad if that is the case."

To the savages everything was quiet at the home and surroundings, and they came forward with rapid strides. "How many are there?" continued the Professor.

"About fifty."

"Then they cannot be the Saboros?"

"Why do you think so?" asked George.

"If you recall, there were only forty-two of the Kurabus before we made the hurried retreat to the little stream, and there were but thirty of the Saboros; and as the former were reinforced by thirty more, it is obvious they have been victorious, and have lost some of their men in the fight, if one really took place."

This seemed to be a reasonable conclusion, and it meant a fight without further parleying, so the party made arrangements accordingly.

The guns and ammunition were placed in reach, and were in condition, in the event the present store gave out, to make an additional supply, as they knew the shop could be easily guarded.

They approached unsuspectingly, and before nearing the house had to cross an open space. The two captives were placed in position so they could see the enemy, for it was now plainly seen they were not the Saboros, as they had hoped. The savages' eyes kindled, as they witnessed their enemies moving into the opening, and when they had come within one hundred and fifty feet John turned to the Professor, who gave the order to fire.

The surprise and consternation depicted on their faces was beyond power to describe. Six fell at the volley, and the rush was instantly stopped. Three of them tried to rise, and their companions assisted them to the rear, carrying them along, in the rush to escape a further onslaught.

But the Professor and John had no desire to shed blood needlessly. The boys were not so considerate. The two captives were in the height of ecstasy at the sight. Before the attacking party had time to proceed far, the Professor emerged from the door, and with a raised hand beckoned to them; but his acts were not understood, or they purposely refused to consider the matter of entering into any terms.

All of them took up position at a safe distance, leaving the three fallen ones, who were, evidently, beyond all earthly help. It was regrettable that such a stern lesson was necessary, but the action of the savages was in line with the attitude of the other tribe who had persistently refused any compromises, either before or after the attacks.

"Why are they so persistent in refusing to talk to us?" asked Harry.

"We cannot understand the conditions under which these people have been conducting their warfares. It is obvious that neither regards the word of the other, and are ready at the first sign to open hostilities."

"It appears to me," remarked John, "that our only remedy in this matter is, if we make any further attempt at the rescue of our companions,

to invade their country, and give them to understand that unless they return such captives as they have, we will fight them to the bitter end. They seem to have no idea that we desire peace, rather than war."

The commotion among the warriors was now pronounced. The consultations were continuous, and they were not by any means harmonious. John took the two captives into consultation, in order to endeavor to find some means by which he could communicate through them with the besiegers.

One of the warriors shot was still moving, and John, beckoning to Ralph and Harry, opened the door, and said: "If we can get the badly wounded one in here, we may be able to open up a door of communication, as the savages we have here are certainly acquainted with each other's language."

They moved out to the open space, and the conferences of the savages beyond, instantly ceased. Without waiting for an examination he was lifted up and brought into the house, where the Professor examined the wounds.

Two shots had struck him, one through the groin, and the other in the arm. The Professor shook his head seriously. "I am afraid he is hopeless. It is a case of internal bleeding. Still it is our duty to aid him to the best of our ability. A wound in this place is not necessarily fatal, and the only danger is in the hemorrhages which, if unchecked, cause death."

"A bullet wound," added John, "is not as likely to be fatal as a knife wound."

The boys looked at John in surprise, and, no-

ticing it, continued: "The remark may seem strange to you, but when I referred to this I had reference only to the fear from hemorrhages, and my reason for saying so is, that in a rough or jagged wound the blood forms clots quicker than where there is a smooth cut; and where the injury is internal, or where it is impossible to manually check the flow of blood, the natural process of repair in the human body, by the formation of coagulated blood, frequently stops the flow."

"What is it that causes the blood to thicken at the wound?"

"The moment blood ceases to flow, or is arrested at any point in the circulatory tracts, coagulation begins. It is for that reason the surgeon tightly binds the arm between the wound and the heart or checks the flow between the two points in the circulation. The cessation of movement immediately begins to thicken the blood, and in case of poisons the venom cannot reach the heart, and in wounds the tendency is to close up the ruptured veins or arteries."

"I have noticed that when the hand is wounded the blood will soon get thick and stop to flow, and I suppose when it gets to the air the same thing happens to prevent a continual flow?"

"Yes; it is nature's way of protecting in cases of injury."

"Judging from the direction of the wound, the bullet has struck the spinal column," continued the Professor.

"That is the view I took after seeing the wound," responded John. "It was the only way

I could account for his prostrated condition. A mere wound in the groin would not have made him so helpless."

"Do you think," asked Tom, "that the bullet could have gone into the backbone?"

"If such had been the case he would, in all probability, be dead by this time. A bullet of this size, striking the backbone, would be sufficient to cause partial paralysis, and if such is the case he will recover. The shock is sufficient to derange his system for a time."

The patient was made as comfortable as possible, and in the course of two hours the Professor announced that the symptoms showed a marked improvement. The besieging party was still on the watch. But no further attack was made.

"There are many things which indicate to me a conflict of opinion among the attacking party," remarked John. The boys crowded around him for an explanation.

"I give this opinion for several reasons: Their continual altercations show that they have no unity of purpose, and during all this time they have done nothing to investigate our position, and determine the best methods of approaching us other than the open. To the right is the river, and to our left the cliff ridge. If they were in concord with each other, the first thing they would do would be to make a careful survey of our surroundings."

CHAPTER V

TRYING TO ESTABLISH COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE NATIVES

NOTHWITHSTANDING the hostile tribe was in front of them to the south, the boys went around the place with perfect safety, as they knew their protecting guns were sufficient guarantees to prevent a close approach.

What would the night bring forth? What steps would be taken by their enemies? All awaited anxiously the condition of the captive Kurabu. It was evident from the Saboro's expression that there was no love between the two. It is remarkable how soon the news of any event travels from one to the other. It seems to be an instinct.

The wounded Saboro knew at the first attack, which the Kurabus made on his tribe at the stream, that some hostile act had been committed, which brought on the fight, although John had not informed him, and during the entire time the savage had been out of sight of the warring parties.

John kept up his continual questioning with the Saboro, and made good progress during the day. Gradually some little sparks of common intelligence would appear, and the morning fight seemed to have a stimulating effect on him. He was not so reserved. It probably began to dawn on him that the intention of his captors was not hostile to the natives.

"Harry, have you the picture of the boys, which

you took from one of the other tribes?" asked John.

Harry went to the shop and soon returned with it. Holding it before the Saboro, he tried to get him to understand that some of the boys were on the island, and inquired if he knew anything about them.

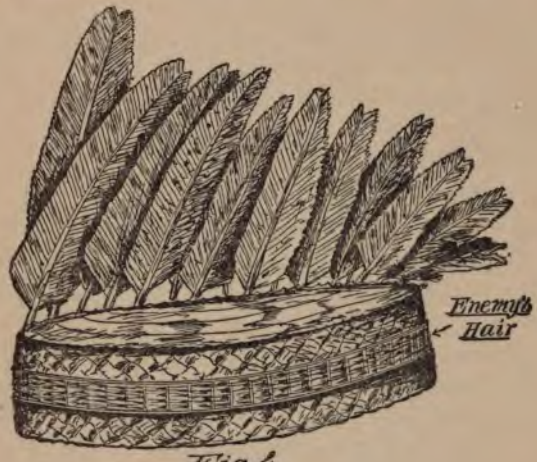


Fig. 4.

SAVAGE HEADDRESS

The moment his eyes caught the picture he started, and nodded his head affirmatively. John then pointed to the Kurabu and then to the boys in the picture, but at this he shook his head. This was sufficiently intelligent to inform them that the boys, if captives, were not in possession of either of the tribes.

The Professor then produced one of the head-dresses which they had taken from one of the war-

riors in the first day's fight, two months before, and by the same sort of pantomimic language the Saboro nodded his head affirmatively.

"We are getting along splendidly," said John enthusiastically. "We know where the boys are, at least."

For the first time the Saboro addressed the Kurabu, who shook his head as he proceeded. What were they talking about? John arrested the attention of the Saboro, and drawing the picture of a bearded man, showed it to him. The answer of the Saboro was a startling one as he held up three fingers.

"I wish we could get him out to the boat-house, to see whether he recognizes the lifeboat." This proposal of John told them the purpose of the inquiry in that direction.

"Before doing that let us proceed with the inquiry as far as we can, and, if possible, get the Saboro to inform his fellow captive that our mission is to get the white men and the boys, and that we have no other object in view."

It was interesting to watch the eyes of the savages as they sat at the evening meal. They were supplied with knives and forks, which they eyed curiously.

"Do you suppose this is the first time they ever had an opportunity to use forks?" asked Tom, laughing. "I know the fellows who got us never used anything like that!"

"They used knives to convey the food to the mouth, did they not?" queried the Professor.

"Well, our limited acquaintance brought us only

among those who ate with the forks and knives which nature furnished them," added Ralph.

"When were forks first invented?" asked George, with a grin.

"They were introduced into England early in the sixteenth century, but were known in Italy before that time. Certain English writers, traveling in the south of Europe, wrote about the curious habit of using tiny little forks, and the

Fig. 5. *Primitive Forks.*

new fad was adopted, and the custom was for each person to have his own knife and fork, which he always carried with him. The inns and public places did not serve these articles."

In the morning the savages were still there, but had moved over toward the river, and were examining, in the distance, the water wheel. What a curiosity it must have been to them. Before leaving on their trip this had been drawn back from the water, so that the cataract was not turning it.

Harry, who was in the shop with Tom, in a spirit

of mischief carried out the levers, used for the purpose, and pushed the wheel into place, and as it began to turn with the rushing waters, the entire tribe was set in commotion. Was this some new demon?

The boys enjoyed the effect produced. "Let us hitch up the sawmill and give them an additional lesson in the arts of civilization."

The belt was attached, and as the saw began to reciprocate a piece of timber was put on the saw carriage and fed into the saw. The effect was startling to their audience, which was heightened when George opened the door of the house, and both boys rushed out to ascertain what the boys were doing.

"What are you doing?" asked Tom.

Harry and Ralph laughed in glee at the commotion, and John and the Professor joined in the sport, when they learned the object of the boys' enterprise.

"We're simply trying to entertain our visitors," shouted Ralph, and the besiegers were simply at their wits' ends to know what all the hilarity was about.

Harry crawled up on the pile of lumber, and beckoned to the Kurabus, and invited them to come up; but this did not seem to appeal to them. In the effort to get down, the pile fell, and his hand was caught beneath the corners of the rough boards and an ugly flesh wound resulted.

The weather was very warm, and the two bodies, which were lying exposed since the early morning two days before, began decomposition, and the

Professor suggested that from a sanitary point of view to say nothing of common humanity, the bodies should be buried as quickly as possible.

The boys secured the picks and shovels, and as they were about to start, the Professor cried out: "Harry, you must not go under any circumstances."

His manner of saying it and the peremptory tone in which it was uttered was a great surprise to the boys. The savages noticed them as they dug the graves, and reverently interred the two warriors. They watched in silence during the entire proceedings.

During the course of the evening George said: "Why did you refuse to let Harry go with us today when we buried the two bodies?"

"It was merely a matter of precaution."

The boys looked at each other, wondering what he meant. The Professor noticed their looks of astonishment, and he continued:

"Harry injured his hand this morning, and the interment of decaying human bodies is dangerous to anyone likely to come into contact in such a manner that the raw tissues or the blood get a taint of the putrefaction."

"Is it any more dangerous than to handle putrefied bodies of animals?"

"There is nothing more poisonous to human beings than decayed human flesh. The dissection of human bodies is one of the most dangerous occupations, for the reason that if the dissecting surgeon should cut himself with the dissecting knife, it is almost sure death.

"This knowledge has been made use of in a most wonderful way. You may, probably, know that various serums are used in the form of injections in order to cure malignant diseases. The curious fact is, that the putrefied body of a rabbit, if injected into a live rabbit, will kill the rabbit, but no other species of animal; and so the like, under those conditions, will destroy the like kind.

"Taking advantage of this knowledge, the bacteria of, say, diphtheria, is isolated—that is, separated from the matter in which it grows, and this is allowed to putrefy, and this serum, as it is called, when injected into a patient having diphtheria is virulent in its actions against the diphtheria in the blood of the sufferer, so that the germs of that disease are thereby destroyed."

The situation at the cataract was now a most peculiar one. How long would the attitude of the savages be kept up? It is true they were not suffering for food, as that was easily obtainable, the large herd of yaks being at their command, and the garden in easy reach.

It was inconceivable that their enemies could hope to starve them into submission. The Professor and John pondered over the situation, and endeavored to explain the apathy of the Kurabus. Not a single hostile movement had been made after the first disastrous attack.

"It seems to be idle to speculate on what their intentions are," said John. "We cannot afford to be cooped up here, when we should be in the field making some effort to rescue those in danger."

"Why not make another attempt to get the two

fellows into conversation, and let them know, finally, what our purpose is," was Harry's suggestion. "If we fail, let us attack them, and show that we are masters of the situation."

"It is true that inaction on our part may be construed into weakness," answered the Professor, "and Harry's plan is certainly better than this sort of business."

John again took up the questioning with the Saboro, and told him in as simple a manner as possible what to say to the Kurabu, and this information was imparted in detached sections for his easy comprehension.

This process was repeated over and over, until they felt he was fully advised of the meaning of their plans, when John ventured to remark: "We might as well make a trial of the fellow, so if you can make a litter to put him on we will take him out and turn him over to his friends."

It required but a little labor to get this ready, and the boys, accompanied by John, carried him out and went forward toward the congregated savages. They looked on this proceeding with astonishment. As the little group with the savage approached the band retreated to a respectful distance.

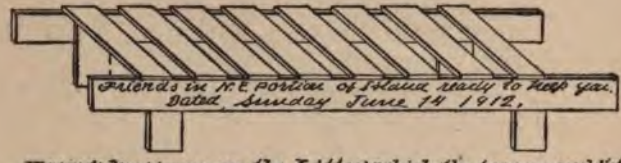
John ordered the litter to be put down, and then by motions to the savages requested them to take him. Before leaving, the Professor had placed a bottle of the fever medicine on the litter, and after John and the boys returned to the house the band rushed up to their wounded comrade, and the first

thing that attracted the attention of all was the bottle of medicine.

They gathered around the litter, and, no doubt, plied many questions. For a full half hour this continued, and then the litter was lifted and he was carried off.

"Did you see the inscription I put on the litter?" asked Harry.

"No; what was it?"



Harry's message on the Litter which the savages couldn't read.

Fig. 6.

"Friends in the northeast portion of the island ready to help you. Dated, Sunday, June 14, 1912."

"Where did you get the date?"

"Well that date is as good as any. We know it is about a year and a half after we landed here, and that will be pretty good notice if any of our boys get hold of it."

The Professor and John heard the conversation with amusement, and the former inquired: "What was your object in putting it 'Sunday'?"

"I thought that would be a good time to date a message of that kind."

All laughed at Harry's smartness in thinking of

putting a message on the litter, as by that means it might fall into the way of some one in distress.

John was especially amused and remarked: "Harry was absolutely right. I know it is Sunday to-day, and there is an invariable rule by which it can be proven, wherever you are, and whatever time you awaken, without ever asking the question of anyone."

This was certainly an interesting thing, and the boys crowded around John. "Let us know the method."

"What we all understand by Sunday is the Sabbath, or day of rest. Among Christians their Sabbath is on Sunday; the Greeks have theirs on Monday; the Persians on Tuesday; the Assyrians on Wednesday; Egyptians on Thursday; the Turks on Friday; and the Jews on Saturday. With this understanding you may be sure to strike the right day in some particular creed. It is the only day of the week about which there is any question."

The besieging party was still in position as night fell, but when the sun rose in the morning they were nowhere in sight, and John, beckoning to Ralph, took their guns and set out on an exploring expedition to the southwest. They went eight miles in the direction of the falls, and failed to find more than the traces of the trail which they had left.

It was a relief to learn this, as it now enabled them to perfect the plans for a more determined invasion of the country inhabited by their would-be enemies.

Their wagon equipment was found satisfactory

in every respect, and John suggested that it might be well to postpone the trip for a little time, in order that he might perfect the means of communication with the captive Saboro, and he set about diligently to perfect the talk.

In some respects he was more intelligent than the chief who had escaped them five weeks before. He grasped the sign language more acutely, but he was not as adept at imparting the information to John. On the whole, however, this was not a disadvantage, but in less than a week he had learned some words which delighted him, and when he was able to move about, John took him to the workshop and showed the different things which were made, and was afterwards directed to the laboratory.

His face became a ghastly sight when he saw the skeletons, and glanced in fear at the Professor. Probably he inferred that he was reserved for that fate. It was a gruesome thing even for the savage that he was. It was a shock, coming as it did after the humane treatment he had received.

The Professor and John looked at each other and smiled at his trepidity, and the former, taking up the bones of one who had a bullet-perforated skull, showed it to him, and thus sought to explain the manner of the death.

For several days afterwards his eyes kept up their shifting glances, and he ever afterwards avoided the laboratory. As in the case of Chief, the workshop interested him, and he would sit for

hours before the turning water wheel and marvel at it.

Unlike Chief, the firearms attracted him beyond measure. His eyes would be fixed on them whenever they were within reach of his vision, and the antics of Angel amused him, as he strutted about with the imitation weapon.

"It should be a part of his education to know that we are able to make these wonderful things, as it will impress him, and if he should take leave of us in the same unceremonious way that Chief did we will have the satisfaction of knowing that he will carry the wonderful stories to his people." This was the Professor's view of the matter, and all agreed and acted on the suggestion.

Harry turned out some trinket for him, and presented a small mirror. This amused him, and he treasured the little metal balls, and Harry made some of them in his presence. During all this exhibition, the boys, as well as John, talked to him and explained the different objects in words.

But there was grim determination now in the minds of all to make a trip which would land them in the heart of the savage country. The various wanderings had fitted them for the task. They knew their own power, and appreciated the weaknesses of their enemies.

It is true they had not, so far, an opportunity to withstand a determined charge, and were not sure but the slightest success on the part of a large body of warriors might materially change the situation.

John was particularly insistent. "You know

what Kipling calls the 'white man's burden' is imposed on us. We have a duty to not only rescue the white men, but to rescue the natives as well. We have a wonderful field here, if we are true to ourselves. We may not be any too wise in finding a way of reaching them successfully, but sooner or later our efforts must win."

The Professor and the boys applauded the position John had taken, and Harry, who was always an enthusiast in the matter of rescue work responded: "Speaking for myself, and for the boys as well, we are with you to the end, whatever the result may be."

CHAPTER VI

APPROACHING THE FIRST HOSTILE CAMP

The only thing the boys really missed on the long journeys was the milk, and necessarily the butter. The yaks were a perfect feast for them. It was jolly fun to take care of them and milk the animals, and all took a hand in caring for the milk and churning the butter.

It was the jolliest, happiest community ever associated, and it was also a trying one in many ways, but these difficulties only brought them closer together, and showed the beauty of mutual aid and comfort, and the pleasures that grew out of them became keener as the days passed.

Each task appeared to be a pleasure; there was no work too hard or exertion too difficult to perform. Whether in preparing the food or making the ammunition, or the hunting or fishing, all seemed a part of the great work which John and the Professor had instilled in them.

They realized that there was something for them to live for; that they were placed on the island for some great object; and that while the rescue of their friends was a solemn duty, the other "burden," to try and conquer the savages for their own welfare, was a part of their life.

Speaking of the subject one evening, the Professor observed: "Many people have a wrong impression of the divine injunction, that 'it is better

to give than to receive.' This does not imply mere material things, but it goes far beyond that. A gift means nothing; it may be a pleasant reminder; but aside from that what is there which is really a service to either giver or receiver? The true giving is that which does not cost the giver anything. The great donor is he who can transfer to the recipient something which he could not otherwise gain. To teach a man how he can make two blades of grass grow where one grew before, or to impart the knowledge whereby a laborious task can be accomplished in an easier manner, or how the drudgery of life can be made a pleasant recreation, these are the great things of life, and are the greatest gifts in the power of civilized men."

"It seems odd that it should be necessary to take a whole arsenal along with us for the purpose of trying to civilize the savages," said George, laughing.

"Quite true," answered John. "It has been said that England, the greatest civilizing force the world has ever known, sent her subjects to the shores of the foreign barbarians, with a Bible in one hand and a gun in the other. The Church and the fort seemed to be a necessary pair of instruments, put up opposite each other on the same highway that led to the rescue of the savages."

"Well, in our case, we carry our fort with us," and Tom laughed as he added: "But what are we going to do about the Bible?"

The Professor smiled, as did the others: "If you carry out that injunction, giving and not re-

ceiving, you are doing what the Bible teaches in essence."

They now had the two captives, one who was still unable to walk and the other rapidly improving, and no doubt in a condition where he would be able to take care of himself within another week, and by that time the other would be so materially improved as to lighten the care necessary in his case.

Meanwhile every moment was put to the necessary preparations for the great self-imposed task, however critical it might be. The ammunition supply was doubled, and ten more gun barrels drilled out, accompanied with the stocks and fittings for the complete equipment. At odd hours the loom was in motion, making the crude sort of cloth that ramie fiber afforded; a load of cane was brought in and fifty pounds of sugar boiled down ready for use.

The wagon was thoroughly overhauled, and a new yoke provided. Thus each day was filled with excitement growing out of the new impulse which had been implanted in them.

The Saboro was learning rapidly, and his efforts to pronounce many of the words sounded generally like a severe case of stuttering, which was frequently amusing, and George, who had a faculty for affixing names, never referred to him except by the appellation of Mr. Stut.

"Why isn't that a good name," ventured Tom, as the significance burst on him. From that time forward he was known as Stut. It was simply the boy habit of giving some name, even to some-

body who had a much better one, and it was so easy to pronounce.

"The other scalawag isn't worth a name, as he is nothing but a chump. He hasn't said a word since he has been having the pleasure of our company," added Harry.

"Mr. Chump will suit him to a dot."

Stut, and Chump, and Angel. John and the Professor laughed heartily as the boys jollied and worked. It was a sample of part of the life in that little community.

But the great day arrived. The wagon was loaded, and the merry party started out on the trail, not knowing what dangers lurked in their pathway. Every part of the forest to the west was a book to them. It had been traversed by the Professor and two of the boys on six different occasions, and three times John and the other two had trailed the different routes.

They recalled how directions and objects had been enigmas to them when the first attempt was made and with what fear and trembling the dark recesses of the woods filled them. It was entirely different on this occasion. They were strong, healthy, vigorous, and had been trained to woodcraft and hunting; were experts with the guns, and under the training of John and their previous engagements with the savages acquired a skill and confidence which only experience can teach.

It would not be going far out of the way to note that John and the Professor were proud of the boys. It would not be possible for two to be more congenial than their association. It was a

constant source of delightful conversation to talk about their boys.

"After considering the matter for some time I am of the opinion that we should go directly west, after leaving the Cataract River, far enough to avoid the densest portion of the forest, which lies to the north of South River, and turn south about five miles east of West River," remarked the Professor, as they were discussing the most available route.

"But you forget, Professor, that will bring us down to the very place where we crossed the tributary of the West River, and where we had our first meeting with the savages."

"That is exactly the reason why I made the suggestion. I also had another object in view. From Stut's description that is the direction we should go to reach the tribe which has the boys."

Harry had forgotten this.

John did not remember the trip referred to, as it was taken during the time when his memory was still in darkness; but he turned to the Professor: "Was that place about ten miles east or southeast of the Tuolos?"

"Yes."

"Then, if we go directly south from that point we shall find the last tribe which captured me, and when we reach them I am sure there will be a welcome for us."

In explanation of this it should be stated that John was captured the first time by a very bitter and vindictive set, from whom he escaped, only to be taken, during the progress of a battle, by the

successful tribe, living to the west. The last tribe was named the Osagas, and when the Professor and the boys had the first fight it was with this tribe, and from them the Chief, named Uraso, was captured, and held a prisoner for a time.

Uraso was with them long enough to become fairly familiar with the language, but John was able to talk with them, with some degree of intelligence, as he had learned the rudimentary part of the language. Uraso's return to the tribe was a sore disappointment, because it was hoped that he would serve as a link by which they could communicate with the savages.

The first night the encampment was on the bank of the upper portion of Cataract River, and they would leave its shore in the morning for a more southerly course. The complete equipment was not a heavy load, since all of them walked except the Professor and Chump; the other captive, Stut, was allowed his liberty, because they felt that the direction of their route would bring them into a neighborhood which was remote from his tribe, and to reach his home it would be necessary to pass at least two of the hostile tribes.

The second night they encamped in what might fairly be called the enemy's country, as on one of the previous trips the first view of them was had not many miles to the south. Caution, therefore, must be exercised, and the custom which had been established of setting regular watches was now resorted to.

Angel was with them, as a matter of course. His aid was invaluable, and the joyful chuckles

which he emitted, when the wagon first started on its journey, told his feelings too well for words.

After the morning meal John and George took the advance. This was the signal for Angel to follow. He shambled along, and whenever opportunity offered was in the trees, swinging along from one to the next, and keeping up the pace without any apparent effort.

At intervals George would call to Angel to ascend a high tree and look to the south. This was now a familiar thing for him to do. He seemed to be proud of the faculty. George had on many occasions performed this scouting operation, and Angel learned to know its meaning.

Noon came before the tributary stream of the West River was reached. They hoped to encamp on its short for luncheon, but it was still an hour or more away.

Before luncheon was over, Angel, in the highest treetop, began to descend with that well-known danger chatter, to which all had become accustomed. George ran to the tree and pointed to the south, and this was the signal for the repetition of his talk about the savages.

Selecting the most accessible tree, George mounted it for thirty feet, accompanied by Angel, and, following the eyes of the animal, could distinctly see moving objects directly to the south.

"I can see them, way beyond the river," he cried. "If I can distinguish anything I will let you know."

"Can it be possible the Osagas are there?" asked the Professor.

Fig. 7. Angel in a Papaw tree sighting the Savages.

"They would be in that direction," answered John.

"But I think we told you that it was near this place we had the fights with the tribes, where we accidentally got between the two factions."

"It is probable they were fighting with the same people that attacked the Osagas the last time, but it is my impression they were much farther to the east."

"Don't you remember, Professor, that on the second day we saw a tribe different from those who attacked us before?"

"That is what I was going to remark. The whole matter of their tribal warfares seems to be pretty much mixed up."

"Yes," called down George, "there is quite a party, probably fifty or more—it is hard to tell at this distance."

"Do you see any huts?" asked John.

After a pause, he answered: "No; nothing I can distinguish. It looks to me as though this is very near the place we had our first skirmish, and what seems peculiar is that when we were here before something like huts were visible in that direction."

George was quiet for a time, when he continued: "Do you remember that after we crossed the river we made our way somewhat to the west and ascended a hill that had large trees on it. I mean the place where we had the second day's fight, when we started for the West River?"

"That describes the place exactly. Can you see

that? What we took for the villages was directly to the south of that point."

"There are no villages there now."

"How near that place are the people you see?"

"Directly to the east, probably less than a mile."

"Then that is our objective point," said John.

The time for action had come. All was excitement, but it was one mixed with a determination which meant business. The wagon was put in motion, and headed directly for the river. Before two o'clock the stream was crossed, and waiting only long enough to water the yaks, they were urged forward at a feverish speed.

John, George and the Angel again went to the front. At frequent intervals Angel swung up into the treetops, and whenever an opportunity presented itself George was an observer from the same vantage points.

They were moving nearer and nearer to their objects. It was nearly four o'clock when John called a halt, as he said: "We can now reach them in less than a half hour, and it is now merely a matter for us to decide, whether we shall make ourselves known now or wait for the morning, when we have a full day before us. For my part, we should camp, and we shall then be fresh for whatever turns up to-morrow."

This was considered good advice, and the fort was erected at the side of a small rivulet where John had halted, and the cattle placed inside. Stut, to the surprise of all, lent a willing hand in the proceeding.

John, after the fort had been erected, and the

evening meal served, said: "This ground is familiar to me. I have crossed and recrossed that stream back there many times, but not at this place. I can recall it because the water, if you noticed it, is quite reddish, or rather a reddish brown, due, no doubt, to the iron along the stream. It flows from the direction of the first tribe that captured me."

"It seems to me we should have some settled policy with respect to our manner of treating with these people. Judging from our past experience with them, we must be firm and aggressive."

"You are entirely right in that observation. Do not let us show any hesitancy in approaching them. In my opinion a bold front will do more to make them respect us than any other course."

The night was clear, but the moon had not yet risen, and before nine John and George left the wagon on a scouting trip in the direction of the savages. The first mile was made at a rapid pace, but it became necessary to observe greater caution. By thus making an early investigation some idea might be obtained of the number, and possibly their designs.

The matter which most interested them was to ascertain whether this was the location of their homes, or if they had to meet a party on the war-path. In the latter case the problem was a more difficult one to handle. It was also desirable to ascertain what tribe they had to deal with.

The thing which early attracted John's attention was the absence of fires. "I do not like that symptom. If they are in the vicinity of their home

there would be fires evident somewhere. They are also exceedingly quiet, which adds to the belief that this is a party on the way to attack some neighboring people."

The forward movement was made from shrub to tree, and from one bush to the next, until they were not five hundred feet from the camp, and at that distance the low sound of voices was distinguishable. It is singular that they had not disturbed a single picket.

"It will be safer for one alone to move through this brush, so remain here and keep a sharp lookout, while I go forward. Under no circumstances must an alarm be made, and do not use the gun except in self-defense, and in such an event do not wait for me, but return to the wagon with all haste."

"How long will you be gone?" asked George.

"If I do not return in a half hour, you may be at liberty to go back."

"But suppose they capture you?"

"If they get me you will know it."

"How?"

"My gun will tell you that."

John cautiously moved forward so quietly that George did not hear his motions, and he could then appreciate the ability of such a woodsman to creep upon an enemy.

As he approached the camp it became more obvious that they had to deal with a band of warriors, and within less than two hundred feet of the main body he spied the first pickets. He knew the custom of the natives in this respect, as they

never scouted singly, so that he was not surprised to see two together.

Cautiously moving away from them, to the left, he again approached in the direction of the center of the camp, and after making a narrow circle to be sure that no other pickets were in the immediate vicinity, carefully advanced to a point not one hundred feet from the outer circle.

This gave him an opportunity to count the combatants. They had no tents, and beyond the mumbling sounds of the talkers, there was nothing to attract attention. There were no captives in sight, and only twice during the time he was in close view of the camp, did any warriors come in, or others go out.

During this period, however, he had gained sufficient knowledge to ascertain that they had only four sets of pickets, and all of them disposed in the direction of the wagon, or to the northwest.

This was certainly a curious thing, and something he could not understand at the time. He debated the subject in his mind for some time, and then as quietly made his way back to George.

"That is the most peculiar way of picketing, to guard only one side of the camp. Let us go eastwardly and try to pick up some information from that quarter."

They worked their way through the brush for a quarter of a mile when John pointed to the south. "This is the direction to take. Guard the movement of every foot now, and stop the moment you see my hand go up."

The way now led up a perceptible elevation,

which could not really be called a hill, but it was a slope, thickly wooded, and with considerably less underbrush than in the lower ground. The trees were not large, however, and the absence of the vegetation enabled them to see a much greater distance, and thus made the work easier, and enabled a much more rapid pace.

CHAPTER VII

JOHN AND STUT RESCUING THREE CAPTIVES

JOHN stopped suddenly, and held up a hand, without saying a word. Then, slowly turning around, whispered: "Do you see the light beyond?" and he pointed to the southeast.

"Yes; I see several. I wonder if that can be their village?"

"That explains the matter that troubled me, in one respect only—ah! I am satisfied now." And George looked to the southwest in the direction indicated.

"Do you see the river? It must flow near here. Let us go forward in the direction of the lights."

Their progress was stopped within three hundred feet by a stream which flowed southwest, and which must pass near where the savage camp was located. It was thus evident why the pickets were on the north and northwesterly side only.

"How far off do you think those lights are?" asked George.

"I estimate them at about three miles, probably more."

George recalled the first lights which they had seen beyond West River, the first time they made the trip to the west. The lights looked just like the ones now before them.

"Can you make any estimate of the number in the camp?"

"I judge there are fully fifty there, as I saw four groups. The night is not clear enough to enable me to make this statement positively, but there are not more than that."

"Would it not be well to go to the village?"

"That would not be as hazardous a task as the one we have just undertaken. It will mean swimming the river, and if you are prepared for that I am only too anxious to make the trip."

Before they had started a commotion was plainly heard in the camp to their right.

"Do you think they have discovered our presence?" asked George, breathlessly.

John did not answer, but leaned forward and listened intently. He did not move for a full minute, while the din increased.

"They seem to be fighting. It is possible they have been attacked, still I do not hear any of the usual cries which accompany their struggles."

Several lights now appeared in the camp.

They waited in silence for ten minutes more, and John said: "Let us move nearer. I am anxious to know what all this means."

"Do you think those at the wagon can hear them?"

"Undoubtedly. They are nearer than we are. For that reason we should reach the wagon as soon as possible, and in doing so we can pass near their camp by making a slight detour. I am most anxious to know what the commotion means."

As the camp was neared, it was evident from the character of the noises that, instead of an attack, it was the arrival, as John interpreted it,

of reinforcements, or of a section of the band which had returned.

The hilarity in the camp was made the more apparent as they drew nearer. "We need not have much fear of approaching now."

They did not require such care in treading the way along, as the excitement in the camp was such as to drown the noise of their footsteps.

"I believe they have some captives. Look at the bunch of warriors to the right, and the struggle of the different ones to go near; their actions, and the dancing around that group, are sufficient to convince me that the new arrivals have just brought them in."

"Yes; I can see them," exclaimed George in excitement. A fire was now being lit, and another, and finally the glowing lights were all around the group, and when the warriors stepped outside of the circle of fires three bound victims were plainly seen.

"That method of confining their captives within a circle of fires is a common one with two of the tribes here, one of them being the ones which first captured me. The Saboros, however, do not adopt that method."

"Look at the one nearest us. He doesn't look like a native. John could not resist the impulse to move forward, but he did it with the greatest prudence, and as he returned, said:

"You were correct. He is not a savage. That is, he seems to be different from the other two. Probably he is from some other tribe, and—"

The man referred to raised himself up, and

turned his position; this brought his face into view. He was a bearded white man, and at the sight John could hardly restrain himself.

"Let us return to the wagon at once."

When the wagon was reached they found the greatest excitement, and learned that the Professor had gone forward in order to ascertain whether the noise from the savage camp was in any way connected with John and George.

While debating the subject the Professor reappeared, to the relief of the party, and John recounted their experiences, and the sighting of the village.

"I felt assured," said the Professor, "as I approached the camp, that you could not have been taken, because not a shot had been fired, and it would be quite unlike you to be captured without giving us that warning signal."

"How near did you go to the camp?"

"Within two hundred feet. I believe there are two white men among the captives."

Thus was new fuel added to the imaginations of the boys. It was, indeed, a mission of rescue. But the new arrivals added materially to the force in their front.

"They must have fully a hundred men, judging from the hurried count made after we returned. I made out fifty before the lot with the captives came in."

John and the Professor conferred on the situation, and made numerous suggestions as to their proper course.

"The only objection I have to attempting a res-

cue to-night is that we shall bring down on us the enmity of the tribe. I had hoped we could show them by our actions that we were disposed to be friendly, and the rescue of the captives would be an act of hostility at the start."

"I appreciate your views, Professor, but we are here, primarily, to rescue our people, and to-morrow they will take them to their village, and the chances of recapture would be lessened. It occurs to me that a strong, bold front at this time will do more to instil fear than any other course."

"I agree with you in the main. It will be a hazardous undertaking, but whether it is or not should not deter us if we consider it the proper course to follow. Yes; let us make arrangements accordingly."

The news of this decision was hailed with delight by the boys. Stut knew what was going on, and volunteered to accompany them. He knew the people before them. They were his deadly enemies.

The boys had made a half dozen pistols to replace those lost when the yaks ran away, about six months before. John removed Chump's breech clout, took off his own clothing, and daubed the exposed part of his body with mud, and Stut, with an eye to business, which was very much to his liking, took the headdresses, and to the surprise of John, and amusement of the others, converted them into fairly good imitations of the clothing worn by the campers beyond.

"Now," said John, "we are about to attempt one of the most difficult feats, the recapture of

prisoners. If possible, we want to do this without sacrificing life. Stut knows the savages beyond are his enemies, and we can count on his assistance. He and I will undertake the rescue. With our new suits we shall be able to approach and enter the camp, and I am counting on his ability to talk with them, to assist us very materially."

The boys now understood the plans, and were delighted, notwithstanding the seriousness of the undertaking.

"The team will be in no danger," remarked Harry, who feared that it would be incumbent on him to remain there inactive. "I want to take part in this, too."

The Professor and John both appreciated this appeal. "Most assuredly, you must be with us. The team can take care of itself, and besides, the warriors over there will have enough on their hands without caring for the team, if they give us any trouble," was John's comment.

John carefully concealed two of the pistols, and selected a bow and some arrows, and Stut had a spear and his own bow. By the time the camp was reached the savages had settled down, and the fires began to dwindle.

It was long past midnight before John began any movement. The boys wondered at the delay, but the Professor stated that the best time to make the attempt would be after sleep had overtaken them, and the chances of success would be much enhanced.

Before John and Stut left, the former turned to the boys: "The Professor knows what to do in

any emergency. The only thing you have to do is to keep cool, and obey the orders of the Professor implicitly."

As they moved toward the camp they looked like two savages, and George said: "They look exactly like the fellows in the camp. That is an ingenious thing to do, and I hope for their success."

The tension on the part of the boys was beyond expression, as they watched the two move up slowly. When the outer circle of the camp was reached they were surprised to see John and Stut rise up boldly and make their way among the sleeping warriors.

When they had reached the interior of the camp they halted.

"What do you suppose they are doing?" asked one of the boys.

"Familiarizing themselves with the situation," was the Professor's response.

"See them, they are lying down. What is that for?"

"Probably one of the guards has noticed them."

"It looks to me as though all the guards are asleep."

"That is exactly the thing they are waiting for."

Occasionally there would be some guttural exclamations, on the part of the savages, and at no time was there complete silence. The waiting was the most trying part of the business. For over an hour the watchers sat silent, and there was scarcely a movement on the part of John or Stut.

The positions of both John and Stut were care-

fully noted, so their movements could be traced. About three o'clock one of the guards arose and walked over to the place occupied by them, and, after a few words, which were plainly heard by the boys, although the language was not recognized, Stut arose, and took the place of the guard. Two others did likewise; and now there was another period of inaction.

"They are now waiting until the last guards have gone to sleep, before taking the next step."

In less than an hour John was seen to rise from his position and slowly move toward Stut, and the quiet motions between the two showed that they were about ready to act.

Continually during this trying watch the white man could be seen moving about uneasily. His head would be raised occasionally, as though listening; but the three prisoners were bound together by the feet, so that they were lying, as it were, in a circle. The four guards, two of which were John and Stut, sat around, all of them nodding.

The moon, which had been out since midnight, made the motions of the actors plain enough for them to distinguish many things, but it was impossible from the position of the boys to learn all that did occur.

When the time for changing the guard took place, Stut was awake or placed himself in such a position that he was elected. He knew that being awake would be the signal for his selection. John, who was not more than ten feet away, also

awake, was picked by Stut, and the two thus relieved retired at once.

Stut, knowing the language thoroughly, encouraged the two remaining guards to continue their naps, while John, who was next to Stut, and near the head of the white man, after everything had again quieted down, began to attract the attention of the captive.

He finally turned his face to John, and the latter held up a warning finger, which, for the moment stunned him, but this was understood, as John stealthily drew out a knife. The man was bound with his hands behind him, and was lying on his side.

After a few cautious movements he succeeded in drawing up the bound wrists close to the shoulders, thus bringing the cords near enough, so that John had an opportunity to sever them. This being done, there was quiet for a time. The man seized the knife which was pushed over, and without any waste of time, cut the cords which joined him to his captives.

The two who were with him saw the act, and the white man held his fingers to his lips. They understood, but were considerably surprised to see Stut in the same act of sending a warning. The man pushed over the knife with his foot, and one of them, after considerable wriggling, secured it and instantly cut his companions' cords.

It was now but the work of a moment to free the other, and the three unbound captives lay there, while Stut pointed to John, in order to indicate that the two were associated. Stut acted

like a trump in this emergency. He was at home in the proceedings, and had probably assisted in work of this kind before.

John and Stut slowly rose, and signaled the captives to do so. To show how every feature of this business had been considered by John, it should be stated that instead of making an immediate rush for liberty, that event was delayed for an age, as the boys thought.

The Professor enlightened the boys on this point. "If your limbs are held in one position for any length of time, they 'go to sleep,' it is said. In other words, the positions of the limbs are usually such that the blood ceases to circulate, and it becomes congested, producing a sort of paralysis, and in that condition the muscles and the nerves are affected. If they had tried to escape the moment the cords were cut this temporary derangement might have prevented them from moving away rapidly.

The captives arose, and the two guards were still oblivious of the situation. Stepping lightly along between the sleeping warriors John and Stut at first led the way, followed as quietly by the captives, and when clear of the guard John and Stut allowed the captives to lead.

Before they reached the last row of the sleepers, one of the guards awoke, and seeing no captives there, and only a single guard at his side, arose suddenly, and his eyes fell on the retreating band. A terrific shriek followed, and without waiting a moment the three captives were urged forward, while John and Stut followed after

and began to shoot arrows toward the fleeing parties.

They bounded forward in the joy of their freedom, and the Professor and the boys could hardly restrain themselves at the success of the enterprise. They made straight in the direction of the boys, and at the Professor's suggestion they allowed them to pass alongside, not more than twenty feet away.

After they had passed the Professor motioned to the boys to trail them, and after following the rescued ones for several hundred feet the Professor called out in a suppressed voice: "Wait, you need not go any farther. Keep quiet, we are your friends."

The white man grasped the nearest fellow and urged him to stop, and he did so, but the other continued on.

Now let us observe the tactics followed by John. When the three captives were beyond the confines of the camp, and well on to the position occupied by the Professor's party, John knew the latter would be able to cope with the situation.

Arresting Stut in the pursuing movement, he turned and held up his hand as a warning to the savages who were arming and following. In an instant Stut divined the trick, and, calling back, said that there was a large party of their attackers in front.

This caused a decided halt in the rush of their followers. Taking advantage of this, the two moved forward in an apparently cautious manner until they had reached the place formerly occu-

pied by the Professor, and then darting north, were soon in sight of the boys, who had charge of the man and one of the native captives.

"Let us go to the left to avoid them. In that way they will not discover the location of the wagon."

A detour was made, but it was done in as quiet a manner as possible, and both reached the Professor and his party before they got to the wagon.

When the white captive heard the Professor's words he stopped in surprise. Turning to see who had addressed him he rushed to grasp the Professor's hand, and saw the boys approaching. "This is too good to be true. Who were the savages that rescued us?"

"We will let you know in time. We must now hurry forward. Your rescuers will come up in time." And without waiting for further words the Professor led the way to the wagon, only to be met by John and Stut, as before stated.

When the wagon was reached they saw the captive which had gone on ahead skulking around the wagon, and Stut rushed forward talking excitedly as he followed him. The captive stood still while he went up and put his arms around him and led him forward. Stut was happy beyond expression, and tried to explain the situation to John.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RESCUED CHIEF MURO

THE white man came to the rescue, and began to explain that the late captive was a brother or a relative of Stut, and the moment he commenced speaking John went over to him, garbed as he was in savage costume, and said:

"How do you do, Sam?"

"The man drew back for a moment, at being thus addressed. "Don't you recognize Varney?"

"John Varney, my old shipmate! How did you get here?"

"This, Professor, was my companion on the ship that sailed from San Francisco, Mr. Blakely. Where have you been all this time?"

"Hunting for you all over the island, when the savages permitted me to go around by myself."

Meanwhile Stut had taken his companion into the wagon, where he greeted Chump. A more happy set of savages could not be found than the group in the wagon, and the fortunate capture of John's former companion also gave added joy to the entire party.

This exploit, so neatly contrived, and successfully executed, gave them a fighting force of ten, and with Chump, who, undoubtedly, would soon be able to assist, they had a very respectable array.

"But we must be on the alert, as our enemies will try and hunt us up as soon as they find how

they have been tricked," said John. Blakely was supplied with a gun, and Stut's friends each presented with a bow and a spear.

The spears were not the savage-made variety, but were long, and of tough steel, the staffs being of shell-bark hickory, and the delight of the two warriors in handling the weapons was plainly shown in their actions.

The force in their front numbered fully a hundred. They still had to be reckoned with. There was no evidence to the savages that the whites had anything to do with the rescue, and they believed that the Saboros had effected the release.

"Well, if this isn't an ingenious arrangement," said Blakely, as he walked around and examined the fort. "You must have had an interesting time here. How long have you been on the island, Professor?"

"Nearly fifteen months. You landed about the same time, judging from John's story."

"I don't want to interrupt," said John, "but I have a little plan that should be carried out at once."

"Go on," said the Professor. "After what you have done to-night everybody ought to be willing to listen to you."

"I have not yet had an opportunity to say that directly to the southeast of us, and not a half mile away, is a river. Beyond the river, probably three or four miles to the southeast, is a village, which, I take it, is the home of the tribe which has just been entertaining you," and he looked at Blakely with a smile.

"If you are able to talk with Stut and his friends better than I can we might learn in what direction their tribe is located, and if the village is between us and their friends, we might move our camp to-night to the other side of the river, and thus get between the village and the warriors."

Blakely listened intently, and replied: "I know where the Saboro village is; we shall have to go directly south to reach them. The tribe from which you rescued us is called the Brabos. Somewhere to the southeast of them are the Kurabus, the meanest devils of the lot, outside of the Tuolos on the western shore."

"Why Chump and his friends are Saboros, so we have two hostile tribes before we can reach aid in that quarter. Do you know," said John, continuing, "anything about the Osagas?"

He reflected a while, and then answered: "I am not so sure, but they are to the south and still farther to the west, but the route would be inaccessible for the wagon from this point, on account of the immense forest which is in the way. I know something about that forest, as it sheltered me for the greater part of a year.

"We have very many interesting things to talk about, but we must not delay the contemplated movement another moment."

The Professor gave the word of command, and the celerity with which the taking up of the fort and storing it away was accomplished was a delight no less to the rescued warriors than it was to Blakely. The wagon was headed for the southeast, and John, beckoning to Stut and his relative,

started out ahead. The other Saboro ran forward and begged to be allowed to accompany them, and John willingly assented.

Directing the Saboros, by motioning, to scatter to the right and to the left of him, the four formed a guard for the wagon, and in their movement to the river the Saboros kept John in sight.

"Fortunately this is not a deep stream, and we will not have difficulty in crossing," said Blakely.

"That doesn't trouble us in the least," answered Harry. "We use the fort sections as floats."

Blakely eyed Harry for a moment. "Do you mean that you ford the deepest streams with these cattle?"

"Why we have forded the West River with this outfit several times?"

"What, the West River, New York?"

Harry laughed: "I had forgotten; we call the big river to the west of us the West. And we have also the South and the Cataract rivers, way to the east of this."

Blakely looked at Harry in astonishment. The boys had cut poles under the Professor's directions, and were now trying the depth of the stream.

"It's all right," cried out Ralph; "bring them along." And Harry drove the team down and over the stream, and before they had gone a mile the first indications of the morning sun began to appear over the mountain tops to the east.

"Move the wagon over to the right, and put up the fort the moment we find the camping spot," was John's injunction, as he and the Saboros plunged ahead in that direction.

John halted at a stream, and pointed out an admirable place for the wagon. Again the process of erecting the fort was gone over, and the Saboros witnessed the first installation of it.

"Now, for some breakfast," said George. "This work makes a fellow hungry." Angel was at hand, as he always was at the preparation of the meal, and the Saboros watched the work, and particularly the part that Angel took, with eyes and mouths open. For the first time they had seen the orang doing duty at command. George saw their surprise and he kept Angel busy.

It was just as interesting to Blakely. He could hardly credit the stories that Harry and Tom told him on the ride down to the river. Just imagine four boys, in all the exuberance of youth, telling about the home they had built up from absolutely nothing. How they had found simply the crude things about them, and had fashioned all the needed things for life from its primitive condition to one of perfection; it was hardly believable.

The poor Saboros were almost starved, and they looked it, too. Blakely had not been in captivity very long on this occasion, so that he was not so emaciated. The savages, however, are able to withstand bodily privations for a long period without becoming exhausted, but the food obtained at this early meal was one which they never forgot.

As soon as the meal was over John signaled to Stut, and he in turn, motioning to his fellows, formed a picket line to the north in expectation of the savages; but they did not return, and night

set in without seeing them. George sent Angel to the treetop frequently for information, a proceeding which was just as much a wonder to the two Saboros as his service in helping with the meal.

Blakely could hardly contain himself, as he saw and heard the different things, and he particularly admired the wagon, declaring it was as strongly

Fig. 8. Primitive Wheel. Bas relief, Acropolis, Athens. 400 B.C.

built as any he had ever seen. Without the wagon it would have been a foolhardy task for six men to boldly march into a country populated as the island was.

"The romance of wheels is the most remarkable of anything in the history of the world. In nature there is nothing similar to it, so far as uses are concerned."

"Do you know," asked George, "about the origin of the wheel?"

"Its invention dates back beyond the time when history began. When man saw the moon it looked to him like a wheel, and may have suggested the idea of a wheel on which things could be rolled. When we stop to consider the vast importance of the wheel it amazes us to see how it forms the prime element in every industry in the world. The wheel and the lever are the two greatest mechanical elements in the universe."

During the night John and Stut made a trip toward the village, and was surprised to find a well-beaten path leading from the northwest toward the village, and that the wagon was located not two hundred feet to the east of the trail.

The village was behind, or on the south side of a slight elevation, which was the reason why it was hidden from their view at the time they crossed the first river. John counted the huts, and found forty-two, of various sizes.

Conferring with Stut, in order to ascertain the number in each, he calculated the village to contain not less than two hundred and fifty, which would not by any means contribute the number of warriors which were in the party.

It was John's idea, on returning to the wagon, to undertake the capture of the village, and he made the proposal at once. This seemed to be a wise plan, as it would put the women and children in their power, but Stut suddenly imparted the information that there was another village to the southwest, belonging to the same tribe, and this at once settled that plan, and it also answered the problem which bothered John.

Blakely, who had acquired considerable acquaintance with that region and the various tribes, was in favor of capturing the village, but the Professor was insistent that there was no desire to shed blood unnecessarily, and that the trip was not for the purpose of revenge, and the taking of the village, with the knowledge that the warriors might be reinforced by a great number, would mean war to the end.

"In your wanderings," asked the Professor, "did you ever hear of any boys who were held in captivity by any of the natives?"

"Yes; a singular thing occurred about six months ago. I was then in the forest, and in my usual pilgrimage into the opening I stumbled on a band of one of the tribes to the east of the forest. They were on the large river which flows along the eastern boundary of the woods. They had several captives, and when they left the river carried a boat with them across the country from the river.

"The proceeding was one which I could not understand at the time. I was taken, on three different occasions, twice by the same band. I escaped each time. The fourth time was four days ago, when the Brabos got me. I was in captivity nearly three months with the Osagas, but they suffered a terrible defeat at the hands of the Tuolos, who live to the northwest."

"We had a severe fight with them on our last trip, and we rescued the two boys here from them," remarked the Professor.

"You were lucky to get away from them, as they

are the terrors of the island. But allow me to proceed. While with the Osagas I acquired their jargon, for it is little better than that. Some of the tribes have practically the same language, and I judge that they were under the same chiefs in earlier times. The language of two of the tribes, at least, seems to be different, and it is probable that this may account in a measure for the continual enmity between them, arising from their misunderstandings."

"I was captured by the Osagas, and regretted afterwards that I left them; but it is fortunate I did, as it was the means of taking me to the Professor and his friends," remarked John.

"But I started out to tell you about the transportation of the boat," continued Blakely. "From the Osagas I learned that several boys had been captured with the boat, and that they were in turn taken from that tribe by the people who live to the east of the Kurabus."

"Do you know of anyone by the name of Wright or Walters?"

"Yes; Wright was one of our crew. Don't you remember him? He was the one shot down when the master of the vessel first attempted to take possession. I may be mistaken, but I think Walters was one of the men allied with the mutineers."

"Won't you tell us some of your experiences when the vessel struck the shore?" asked John.

"Wright, who was with us when you left to go to the pantry to get some food, and also Champney, all agreed that you had been washed over-

board before the boat struck. When I recovered my senses, I found an indescribable mass of wreckage all about me, and food was the first thing I searched for.

"I found one of the guns, and later on a revolver, but I had no ammunition except that in the weapons. Some few tins of provisions, and a crushed box of biscuits, all soaked with sea water, were all I could recover, and various articles of clothing, which I gathered together.

"As soon as strength began to come back to me I searched the beach in both directions, and found four dead bodies, one being the mutinous master, who was lying near the shore, and all had their pockets drawn out. This was sufficient informa tion to assure me that some had been saved, but the rifling of the pockets of the unfortunates was something I could not understand, and I concluded that it was done by some of the devils who were on our vessel, or it had been the work of people on the island."

"I recovered from the blow," said John, "and found myself lying by the side of the master, and found the pockets rifled, as you say, and I regained my senses before you did, as I now see."

"Yes; I recognized the footprints of several; faint traces only. I then followed the seacoast, in the hope or belief that if the island was inhabited, they would be near the coast. I traveled for miles, and then noting traces of people went inland, and the first tribe I ran across was the Tuolos.

"I debated for hours whether or not to throw

myself into their hands. But a sight the third day decided me. A party was taking a captive to the sacrifice. Whether or not he was one of our companions I do not know. The sight so unnerved me that it did not occur to me that it might have been one of them.

"I fled to the south, and struck the forest. There I found numerous wild beasts, and they were really my salvation for months, as I afterwards learned that the savages had never been known to go far into the dense portions. I found a recess or cove among the rocky sides of an elevation, which I converted into a home, and from that place I could see across the intervening country to the large river.

"It gave me a good scouting position, and I saw many tribes and parties pass and repass, some of them many miles off, and witnessed two battles between hostiles, but I do not know what tribes they were. I soon became expert in providing food, as it was all I had to do.

"I would frequently, in my scouting trips, go to the river, and began to tire of my isolation. I made that my home for nearly eight months. I really grew desperate from the monotonous life, and the feeling that I must undertake something hazardous if I ever expected to escape from the hunted life in the forest.

"I still had four shots in the revolver, but the gun was useless without ammunition. But I took it with me, and the first day, after I crossed the river, I was surrounded by the Osagas. I was much more rugged than you see me now, and had

a long beard. I tried to make friends with them, and succeeded in this pretty well, but they were attacked by the Brabos here, and treated most barbarously during the week I was a captive.

"One night I escaped and turned to my mountain home, and again fell into the hands of a party on the warpath, but of an entirely new tribe. They took me way to the south, and I learned, in a way which could not be mistaken, that I was to be offered up as a sacrifice, and when the time came I was frenzied with desperation, and the moment my arms and legs were free I seized the very club which was prepared for me and hewed my way through the warriors and gained my liberty.

"But this is tiring you. Twice more I was captured, and escaped once more, and the last time you came to the rescue."

The story was listened to with the utmost eagerness. His tale, taken together with John's and Ralph's and Tom's experiences, gave them the clue to the mystery of the lifeboat and two of the men mentioned in the note, but it did not lift the veil from the contents of the message.

It was plain now where the Tuolos got the guns which they had, but could not use, as explained when Ralph and Tom were captured.

CHAPTER IX

MARCH TO THE SOUTH. THE MESSAGE TO THE SABORO TRIBE

"Have you any suggestion to offer why the Brabos do not return?" asked the Professor.

"I suppose," said John, as he smiled at the remembrance, "they are hunting for the two savages who took their prisoners."

A real council of war was now held, and the Professor gave his opinion as the wisest course to take. "We have, without question, put Stut and his friends under lasting obligations to us. From all the information obtainable, their tribe lives a considerable distance to the south, and to reach them we must pass the territory occupied by the Kurabus."

"We must remember, however," interrupted Blakely, that they are in all probability, the most powerful of all the tribes."

"So I understand," he answered; "and that is just what I am coming to. If we can advise Stut of our intentions, and induce him to make the trip through the country and inform his friends, we may be pretty sure of assistance from that quarter."

"I think the Professor is right in his diagnosis of the case. If we can get an ally, even though it may be the weakest tribe, it will give us a vantage ground to work on; and I further believe that

we can, by that means, consolidate the weakest of the tribes, and thus secure the mastery, and release those who are in captivity, by that means much quicker than by attempting it unaided."

The Professor's views prevailed. It was now near noon, and no hostile party was in sight. The fort was stowed away, and the march to the southwest, to avoid the village, began.

Stut was brought into conference, and between John and Blakely, he was informed that they were on their way to his people. At first his eyes kindled, and he beckoned to his brother, because this relationship had now been established between them, and imparted the good news, and after a moment's hesitation, their brows grew dark, and the party knew what that symptom meant.

John grasped a gun, and pointed to it, and Blakely taking the hint, advised them that they need not fear the result of the undertaking. This seemed to satisfy them, and with a greatly altered countenance took up the work of scouting on the left side of the wagon.

It was desirable to keep sufficiently far from the village to hide the movement of the wagon, and at the same time remain close enough so that they would not be brought into the vicinity of the other village to the south.

Thus the march proceeded forward for fully two hours without an incident. Then John signaled a halt. He had reached the well-beaten trail or highway between the two villages, and

this must be patrolled in both directions before the wagon could be sent across.

The necessity of this was apparent when it is understood that they were now in comparative open ground, and only an occasional tree was in sight. Stut ran in and pointed to the south, and John went forward, and was quickly enlightened at the sight. Coming up from the lower village were the warriors, reinforced by a considerable number. They were more than a mile away, and the order was given to erect the fort.

Long before they came in the immediate vicinity they were ready to receive them, and the utmost quiet was observed. The band passed without observing them, and as soon as they disappeared at a safe distance, the fort was again reinstalled on the wagon, and the hurried march recommenced.

A considerable distance was covered before night, and they congratulated themselves on getting rid of the Brabos so easily. Camp was made for the night at a spring that flowed from the rocks alongside a hill, and which also afforded them protection for the night.

Referring to the matter of his wanderings, Blakely, during the course of the evening, said, "The most trying thing I experienced, during all of my travels, were the winds about five months ago. For fully three days I could hardly move from place to place."

"That was during the period of the monsoons, and you will remember, it was a year after we had our terrible experience," answered John.

"I had forgotten that," he replied.

"I suppose then that they come regularly each year."

"They really come twice a year. In one period they blow in one direction and at the other period in the other direction."

"I also noticed that, and I presume we may expect the one from the southeast in another month."

"Quite true; but those from that direction are not so severe."

"I recall that they have the Siroccos in Italy, which blow across the Mediterranean, from the northern shores of Africa; and the simoons of Arabia are also terrific while they last."

"The most trying winds I ever experienced," said the Professor, were the Kamsen winds of Egypt and the Harmattan which blow over Africa from the eastern side, owing to the heated atmosphere. They are literally like ovens in their intensity."

"It is one fortunate thing about the winds here, they are not hot or stifling, especially not these which come in the autumn."

The hill to the back of them, and against which the wagon was placed, close to the precipitous rocks, afforded protection in that direction, so that the pickets were required for the exposed positions only. Blakely took a hand in the watch during the night, and Stut, with his brother, insisted on doing double duty in that direction.

The timber was thicker here than at any other place along the route since they had left the Bra-

bos country. Hickory, oak, walnut, a species of ash, as well as cyprus, were found in abundance as well as many varieties of valuable shrubs, rubber plants, and the like, and some of the most beautiful flowers, far exceeding those in the northern portion of the island.

"It seems singular to me," remarked Harry, during the course of the evening, "that all the savages live in the southern and western portions of the Island. We happened to be cast ashore at the eastern end and remained there, while all the others seemed to reach the western part and thus came into contact with the savages without any trouble."

"They have found, by living here, that this part is the most desirable, from a climatic standpoint," answered the Professor. "The knowledge of the most suitable spots is one acquired by all peoples in the different countries. When the Spanish priests established the Missions on the Pacific coast, they found the villages located at certain points in the interior, and a study of the places so selected, showed remarkable knowledge."

"I found that condition of things in the remotest portions of Africa," said John. "The most primitive inhabitants had the capacity to occupy locations which could not be improved on by the knowledge of the white man. As the Professor says, all the Missions in California are located at such vantage points, which were usually the site of the Indian villages."

"In what respect were those locations better than others?"

"The winds were usually a factor in deciding the places for the villages. This will be found particularly true on this island. The monsoons which blow the hardest in this region, as we all know, come from the north. The return winds come from the southeast. In the one case the trees and the elevations protect them from the north, and the mountain range affords shelter from the east."

Before morning a severe storm set in, and later was accompanied by a rainfall, which decided them to rest until it abated, so that it was past noon before the weather conditions were such as to enable them to go forward.

Chump's wonderful constitution was bringing him around and healing his wound rapidly, and he was out of the wagon, and made short trips each day. His deportment had entirely changed. Instead of being glum and morose, as was his habit earlier in the days of captivity, he began to examine things with interest, and talked and laughed with his fellows.

The remarkable one of the four Saboros was Stut's brother. He was the most powerful of the lot, and by far the brightest, as he grasped questions propounded by John and Blakely, with the utmost keenness. In physical proportions he was the equal of Chief. He was more voluble than either of the others, and judging from the manner in which he treated many of Angel's antics, he must have been a wit in his tribe.

One thing was noticed from the first, and that was the deference which the other three always

accorded him. John was the first to notice this, and the observing eye of the Professor was also quick to detect it.

"From the indications I am inclined to believe that Stut's brother is more than the ordinary individual in his tribe. I have noticed that in our scouting Stut never attempted to do anything until his brother was consulted." And John related many incidents of like character.

"Suppose we endeavor to ascertain his position," responded the Professor. "It would not surprise me to learn that he is a chief, and if so it will be a strong factor."

John was quick to question Stut, and together with Blakely, it did not take long to satisfy themselves on this point. When captured neither of them had sufficient clothing to show the rank to which they were entitled, and the certain knowledge that he was a man of distinction in his tribe, was a most pleasing thing.

George requested John to learn his name, and this was a matter easily ascertained. Indeed they might have known this earlier, were it not for the stirring scenes which they had passed through since the rescue, as Stut was heard to mention the name Muro on many occasions, but during these conversations it had never been associated with his name.

He was, notwithstanding his size, exceedingly light of foot, and could throw a spear with great accuracy and to enormous distances. The heavy bows which they had were simply playthings in his hands. The guns were the most fascinating

things to him, and he was constantly questioning about them, and admiring the workmanship.

When Stut pointed out Harry, and told him that he had made the guns, and in his language pictured out the wonderful workshops at the Cataract, he could not keep his eyes from him, and walking over to Harry put his arm around him, and patted him on the shoulder, and finally rubbed Harry's nose with his own.

The Professor instantly recognized this tribute, and said: "That is a sign that you are his eternal friend. You may depend on him to the extent of his own life. It is a way many savages have of indicating love and devotion."

Stut easily recognized the Professor as the leader of the expedition, and walked over and performed the same rite with him, to the extreme gratification of all. It was not necessary for him to do more than he had in the past to show his affection for John.

Gratitude, if earned, as it was in this case, is a tie which the savage regards as sacred. The Professor selected one of the guns, and presented it to Muro, and showed him how to fit in the cap and to load it, and this token was exhibited in a manner that could not be mistaken.

Harry went to one of the lockers and brought forth small mirrors which had been made, and handed one to each of the warriors, and each thanked Harry in a voluble manner. The three warriors were then each invested with guns, but they knew that it would not be wise to do any practicing in that locality.

Blakely, who had been an officer in the army years before, conceived the idea that it would be a good thing to practice drilling, and this caught the fancy of the boys, who ranged themselves in line, and with the guns went through an evolution of arms. All the boys had been taught this on shipboard as part of the regular routine, and the precision with which this was done excited the admiration of the Saboros.

When John and the Professor also took up the guns and stood in line, the natives did likewise, and imitated every movement, with greater or less skill. The marching tactics were also shown, and they became willing and interested participants.

"It is too bad," said George, " that we can't have an exhibition of firing."

"We may get plenty of that later on," answered John.

They were instructed how to care for the guns, and the caps were purposely kept off, so they would not be accidentally fired. All this was done in preparation for the time when the services might be needed.

"A fighting force of eleven, with guns and plenty of ammunition, is sufficient to lick the whole island, if we understand our business," was Blakely's comment, after viewing the brigade in his front.

Thus, at each step, the success of the mission seemed assured. Allies had been secured on whom they could place confidence, and they started forward with an earnestness and a determination never before possessed.

On the way were numerous springs, which formed rivulets of clear, cold water. The landscape was beautiful in every direction. It could be readily understood why this was such an attractive portion of the island. The soil was a dark, rich loam, but scarcely a foot of it was tilled by the natives.

Some of the tribes, as Blakely observed, planted a few vegetables, but aside from that the principal occupation was hunting game, and the more delectable occupation, on the part of some tribes, to capture their fellows, and offer them up as sacrifices to their deities. What a Paradise this Island of Wonder could be made if the people were governed by a directing hand.

How the Professor's heart must have longed to be able to show these people the advantages of peace and harmony. No doubt he contemplated this many times, and in his talks this was frequently alluded to.

As evening was approaching the wagon was halted at one of the sweet springs, and the Saboros, under the order of Muro, scattered out to form the guard for the camp. The fort was erected as usual, and the evening meal prepared. An ample supply of food was apportioned out for each of the guards, and the boys were about to take them to the watchers, but Muro would not permit this, and compelled each to come in for the purposes of the meal.

John was depended on to keep the camp in proper safety, and Muro recognized this as his function, and when later on he came to John and

beckoned him to follow, the latter knew that something of more than ordinary importance was developing.

On the way toward the northwest, from which they had come, there was an evident movement, which could be perceived in the bright moonlight. Muro pointed to the earth and moved his hand along, and John was quick to grasp the situation and its meaning. He meant that the savages were trailing them by the wheels of the wagon, and this was made doubly easy on account of the heavy rain of the day previous.

The movement in front was plainly visible to those accustomed to such things, and the situation was carried to the wagon without delay. No attack was anticipated during the night, and they had plenty of time to plan their defense.

Who were the enemy? Muro did not know, but it was doubtless those who had thus kept on their trail for two days, in the hope that they would be held in check by the Kurabus to the south of them.

Calling John and Blakely into consultation, the Professor again suggested the plan of sending word to the Saboros through the chief Muro, or his brother, Stut. The wisdom of this course was now apparent, so Muro was called in, and the plan outlined.

He comprehended the situation at once, and immediately called in Stut, to whom he explained the nature of his mission. Without a word, he was provided with all the arrows which could be found, and given one of the spears, and before leaving

George had prepared a package of food, which was gratefully accepted.

All this was done with so much celerity and in such a businesslike manner that the boys readily understood that whatever may be said of savages, it impressed on them the earnestness and the obedient spirit that characterized all their movements.

CHAPTER X

THE CAPTURE OF THE PROFESSOR

THERE is nothing more trying than to wait during the long watches of the night, knowing there is an enemy at your door, who awaits the morn before attacking. Light and darkness are wonderful things to contemplate. Every variety of subject was discussed, the moon and the stars, plants, trees and flowers, the habits of people, the seasons, and kindred topics, but the one absorbing topic that always had a leading place was the savage.

"There is one thing I must admire in them," said Blakely, "and that is persistency."

"That is one of the four cardinal principles in nature," answered the Professor.

George was at the front at once. "What are the other three?"

"Resistance, reciprocity, and equalization."

"That is something new to me, and I do not know whether I understand the meaning of it."

"Well, in nature, everything persists in doing and in continuing to do just what it started out to do. For instance, a ball at rest will continue at rest forever, and if it is moving it will continue to move, unless in either case it is acted on by some external force."

"Now every object in nature also has resistance. It objects to a change of form or direction."

"I can understand that, but I do not see where the other two come in."

"Well, nature is reciprocal in its tendencies. It gives and takes, so to say. If you heat water and set it aside, it will cool off in course of time. If the water should be placed in a receptacle that had air in it, the water would cool down, and the air would become warmer at the same time, and the heats would reciprocate—that is, become of the same temperature."

"Then, if you should heat up different subjects at the same time it would be found that some would require double the length of time to take up the same amount of heat. Suppose we take a pound of iron and a pound of aluminum. In the case of iron it would absorb, say 100 units of heat in ten minutes, whereas it would take fifteen minutes for the aluminum. If the heat is withdrawn it will be found that it takes the aluminum fifty per cent longer to give off its heat than the iron, and thus the process is equalized."

When morning came the savages were seen in force to the northwest, and Muro's prediction that the Brabos were on the trail was found to be correct.

"This was the first time this tribe had ever faced the white men. As was afterwards learned, they had a knowledge of the existence of the "Fire Fiends," as they were designated, but they now had to learn something first hand.

As soon as the sun had arisen sufficiently to distinguish objects well they moved up, keeping for the time at a safe distance, and Muro took delight

in showing himself to his late captors. This caused a chorus of howls, at which Muro laughed.

At a signal they started forward, launching their arrows, when within shooting distance, and without stopping, poised their spears and rushed forward. At a signal seven shots rang out, and the leaders fell. Seven more guns were brought into position. The charge halted, and the Professor advised all to reload. Muro saw the wonderful execution, and danced about in glee, but he

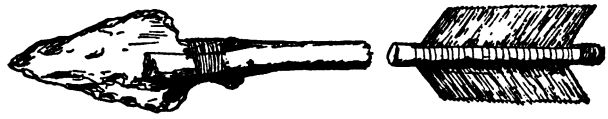


Fig. 9. Arrow type most frequently used.

could not understand why the shooting was not continued. It was such an unheard-of proceeding.

Without stopping to gather the wounded, they retreated to a safe distance, and the party had an opportunity to count the number of the attacking party. All agreed that over a hundred were engaged, and it was evident that the Brabo village to the south had been called to assist.

They surrounded the wagon at a safe distance, and the siege was begun. This could have been done only on the theory that starvation would compel a sortie or surrender. They had no idea of the number within the fort, but they knew what the effect of the fire had been, and they respected that warning.

Muro was instructed to confer with them, and to say that they had no hostile intentions, and this was conveyed to them, but the only response was that the whites had commenced the hostilities by taking their prisoners from them; which was true.

There was no common ground on which they could enter into a treaty with them, and the question now was to fight their way out as best they could.

"We might remain here for the day and night, and if we find they persist in besieging us, must continue to the south, and fight them as we go."

All agreed to the Professor's proposal; and they settled themselves to the more comfortable pastime of waiting for the morning. A most careful watch was kept up all night, and on two occasions parties stole up in order to secure more advantageous positions, but the chief Muro and his friends were too much on the alert to give them any advantage.

The wounded savages were removed by their friends in the night, and as soon as breakfast was over the entire party ranged alongside the wagon and headed for the south. This direction, it will be understood, would bring them directly into the heart of the Kurabus' territory.

If the two tribes were hostile toward each other this might be a factor in their favor, but if friendly it would certainly mean a bitter fight. Muro advised a southwesterly course, and this would, of course, avoid the necessity of fighting both tribes, but it might also lead them into another tribe just as hostile.

The direct route to Muro's tribe was to the south, or rather to the southeast. It was a difficult problem to decide. They must force the issue, be it right or wrong.

"We must ascertain from Muro how long it will take Stut to reach the tribe," suggested John.

"He says two days, and two days more to get the people in motion. Muro was pretty smart. He says he instructed them to attack the Kurabus on the south, and that would divert them from us, but the trouble is that he has hardly reached them yet, and before night we may be within the territory of the Kurabus."

A southwesterly course was decided on, and the Brabos followed. Evidently they had no fear of the Kurabus, and the intervening time might have been employed by them in sending runners to inform them of the invasion. All these things had to be taken into consideration.

The camp that evening was made at a running brook, and in the open, as usual. The camp was again surrounded, and pickets were established to keep them at a safe distance. There was no indication of the appearance of the Kurabus, and this relieved the situation somewhat.

When morning came the besiegers were nowhere in sight, and this meant one of two things; either that they had given up the fight in sheer disgust, or that the Kurabus were at hand.

The country became more broken as they advanced, and the continual ascent indicated a ridge of some extent, and this might be the dividing line between the limitations of the tribes on the dif-

ferent sides, just as they had found the streams to effect this division, and this was also pointed out by John and Blakely.

The best trails were selected by John who was in the advance with Muro, and at noon stopped within a valley which had a curious rock formation that attracted the eye of the Professor. The old instinct, to discover minerals, was too strong for him to resist, and with a pick was soon prospecting along the rocky walls.

He was gone for an hour before his absence was particularly noted, and George was the first to direct attention to it. John and one of the Saboros started to the south in the direction taken by him, and returned in less than a half hour without any tidings.

It was certain he had gone to the south, and the wagon was set in motion, and hurried forward. All was excitement now. Both sides of the ridge were examined, and indications found where the rock had been chipped and samples set aside.

As John crossed one of the ridges, he saw in the distance a band of savages moving rapidly to the southeast, but too far distant to be able to distinguish the individuals containing it. When Muro came up, he gazed forward, and his sharp, piercing eyes were sufficient to confirm their fears.

The Professor had been captured!

This startling news was conveyed to the boys, and their grief was heartrending to witness. They moved about from place to place without knowing what to say or do. The tears came in spite of their efforts.

"What shall we do?" asked Harry through his tears.

"We must follow them," answered John, "but the wagon cannot travel fast enough for that. Muro and one of the Saboros will accompany me, and Blakely, you remain with the boys, and follow as I direct."

Then going to the highest point of the hill, he pointed to the south. "See the end of the forest in the distance, which may be five miles beyond. You will see the glimpse of the river there. To the east of that is an elevation, with trees very distinctly outlined. That will be your objective point. Make for that place as rapidly as possible, unless you get information from us to the contrary."

"That is the forest where I made my home," said Blakely. "I know every foot of this country, and all down beyond that point. Within ten miles of that place is a savage village, and my opinion is that they are the ones who have the Professor."

"Muro has just informed me that the Osagas live in that neighborhood, or somewhat farther to the west, and beyond the river is another tribe called the Berees."

The boys looked at John. "Weren't you captured by them, and was not Chief from that tribe?"

"Yes, but my impression is that the Osagas are to the east of the place indicated."

If the Osagas captured the Professor there was some hope, because they did not believe Chief would permit him to be ill-treated. They had still to account for one, if not two, tribes in the south

of the island, and of whom they knew nothing, except the slightest rumors.

John selected six of the guns, and an ample supply of ammunition, and as the chief and his associates had been drilled in the use of the weapons since the last fight, it was felt that with the spears they carried they would be a match for a pretty good force.

Thus equipped they plunged forward in the direction of the disappearing band.

Let us follow the movements of the Professor. In his eagerness to collect samples, he went much farther than he intended, and left the wagon without taking anything in the shape of a weapon. When he had proceeded less than a half mile from the wagon, he was surrounded by a dozen warriors, whose headdress proclaimed them to be a tribe entirely different from any that they had formed the acquaintance of, and as he saw resistance was useless, quietly submitted, and tried by all his arts to induce them to accompany him.

But to all his efforts they turned a deaf ear, and without waiting hurried him across the ridge and along the southern incline. The pick was taken away from him, and his clothing examined, but to his surprise nothing was taken from his pockets, although he carried a small knife, and other trinkets that the boys had made.

The march was kept up for fully four hours directly to the south and then turned to the east, and shortly before night the village came into view. His arrival created great excitement; and all turned out to welcome the strange man.

Months before this the Professor, in the course of his experimental work, had made what is called synthetic food—that is, the same material substances as are used in any particular vegetable, are combined to have the same food qualities as the real article, and when put up in tablet form it requires but a small compass to give as much nutriment as a full meal.

It was fortunate that this and the other contents of his pockets were not removed at the time of the capture, because those tablets became a wonderful agent, as the subsequent story will show.

When he arrived his captors took him to the chief at once, and he treated the head of the tribe with the greatest deference. The house of the chief was the most pretentious in the village, as there were three rooms to be seen, and passing by the open passageway at one side he saw a child, probably ten years of age, lying on a couch.

Evidently it was suffering, as its wan and drawn face indicated. After making his deference to the chief, he turned to the little sufferer, and the women shrieked and threw themselves in his way. He turned to the chief, and pointed to the child, and moved in that direction.

The chief gave an order, and the women stepped aside. The Professor knelt down and took the child's hand and felt its brow, while the chief looked on in astonishment. Turning to the chief he motioned for water, and indicated this by making the motion of pouring water from glass to glass.

It was instantly understood, and when the water came, in a small gourd, he asked for another, or smaller vessel. Then reaching in his pockets he drew forth one of the small vials which the boys had made, and poured a small portion into the small gourd, and forced some of it past the lips of the little sufferer.

Fig. 10. Shell Vessels.

All this was done in silence, and they looked on him with awe. His white hair and long snowy beard, the kindliness of his face, and his brave demeanor seemed to impress them in a wonderful way.

At an order from the chief the warriors and attendants disappeared, and he was left by the side of the couch, holding the sufferer's hand.

In less than a half hour the attendants brought a bountiful supply of food, but he waived them aside, and remained there undisturbed for fully two hours, during which time he had administered three doses of the medicine.

The chief came in, and, taking him by the hand, led him away, and did all in his power to express his thanks for the service. One of the three rooms was assigned to him, and during the night he went to the patient many times, and to his gratification by morning the fever was broken, and the child began to perspire freely.

When the chief came in and saw the condition of the little girl his gratification was beyond all bounds. The Professor witnessed, for the first time, how savage affection for their own can be just as intense as among civilized tribes.

The chief led him outside and pointed to the north, indicating that he was ready to take him back to his friends; but the Professor shook his head, and pointed to the child. This amazed the chief, and he could hardly believe in the refusal of his captive to leave.

During the afternoon he was surprised to notice the arrival of a large number of warriors, who had, evidently, returned from some skirmish, as they carried several wounded, and also three prisoners, who were incarcerated in a hut near the center of the village.

No restraint whatever was placed on his movements, and he wandered from place to place, and witnessed the wailings of several women who heard of the deaths of their own kindred. The

Professor reproached himself, as he thought of the suffering he had, unwillingly, caused to others, but it could not be helped.

One of the men was severely wounded by the thrust of a spear, and the Professor instantly saw that he was suffering from internal bleeding. Pushing aside the men who surrounded him, the Professor knelt down, changed the position of the bleeding warrior, and pressed his hand against the artery which led to the wound.

His presence there, and the peremptory manner in which he undertook the relief, astonished the new arrivals, but it was for a moment only, when the hurried tales which spread from one to the other circulated among the crowd, and as the chief stepped forward and noticed the Professor he gave a command which plainly showed that his work had been appreciated.

The Professor held his hand on the artery for fully an hour, until the blood clots began to form, and thus staunched the flow. The other wounded ones were attended to immediately after the critical patient had been put into a safe condition.

The men, women and children followed him around, as he moved from place to place. Returning to the chief's child, he found a slight fever, but this soon abated, and the second day the little patient began to assume a brighter appearance.

During all this time the Professor had not partaken of a mouthful of the food offered him. His only nutriment was obtained from the tablets re-

ferred to. The chief could not understand this. Their amazement was intensified when he again refused food the third day.

The Professor was, of course, playing a part. Mystery is the most potent thing with uncivilized tribes. He knew that John and the boys would be able to take care of themselves, and felt sure that before long he would hear from them. He was making a strong ally of these people, and the proper course was pursued to bring this about.

He would have been able at any time after the first day to go back to his companions, and to add to his service something mysterious would make his power over them more potent than the mere healing.

It should also be understood that the motive behind this had another meaning. All tribes have their own physicians, or medicine men, and the great factor of strength with them is the mysteries with which they are able to shroud their cures. To heal the chief's child, or to perform any other cures, would mean the bitter and vindictive hatred of that class.

It was necessary, therefore, that he should be able to do that which was beyond their power to perform. To live without eating would be such an extraordinary power that it must impress them. The medicine men performed their incantations, but he made no objections, and it was plain that his ministrations were distasteful to them, when he saw their frowning faces.

The chief's power, and the grateful looks of the one which first received his attention, were suffi-

cient to assure him that the policy he had pursued was successful.

Meanwhile, what were his friends doing to rescue him? John and the two Saboros plunged across the hills much faster than it was possible to urge the team. The trail was soon discovered by his associates, and they stopped only when night fell. After partaking a hurried meal, they again moved forward for an hour, when voices were heard in the distance.

The mumblings grew more and more distinct, and when they halted were surprised to find a considerable body of savages ahead. If this was the same tribe which captured the Professor it must have been reinforced by a considerable body, as there were not more than a dozen in the party which took him.

Moving to the left quite a distance, in order to avoid them, they came unexpectedly on another body, still more numerous. Here was a mystery which John could not solve for the moment. Muro was the first to catch the meaning of it. This was a hostile tribe, and they were waiting for the morning before attacking.

It now appeared evident that the Professor's captors were with one or the other of these warring factions, and they withdrew to the north, and found an elevation near by, so that they might be able to follow the events of the next day.

But the wagon was coming up in the rear. It must be intercepted, and the three scouted to the north in order to discover whether it had moved up near enough to the position before night fell.

The night passed without finding the wagon. Undoubtedly they had made camp before reaching the comparatively level country now occupied.

In the morning the two tribes maneuvered, and the fight began. It would have been bad policy to mix in the affair, but Muro approached as close as possible in order to discover who the combatants were. When he returned his only words were: Osagas and Berees.

The latter were a new tribe to John, but he was gratified to know that the Osagas were so near, and it greatly increased his interest in the affair.

CHAPTER XI

FINDING MORE OF THE INVESTIGATOR'S BOYS

THE fight was hotly contested. It was noticed that the combatants did not fight hand to hand. It was mostly a skirmish with bows and arrows, and considerable tactics were displayed in the effort to turn each other's position, and to effect captures.

To say the least, the so-called battle was a tame affair. In numbers they were evenly matched. Sometimes, under cover, one party would approach close to the other and effect a rush, but this would be checked, and thus it raged back and forth with unvarying success. Those wounded would be captured in these rushes, and that seemed to be the main thing they were striving for.

It was this battle that brought the wounded and the captives into the village where the Professor was. When the fight terminated John had no idea which was the victor. Judging from their standpoint, the side securing the greatest number of captives won in the encounter.

While the battle was going on, the team came up and it was hurriedly concealed. Muro knew that neither tribe would come to the north, until driven in that direction by force of numbers, so the wagon was comparatively safe.

The boys were very low-spirited, when they learned of the battle in their front. To move farther during that day and night would be folly.

The way in front must be cleared. The next day the two forces were still facing each other. In spite of all the wit and ingenuity of the Saboros and John not a glimpse could be obtained of the Professor. They had no fear for him if he was in the hands of the Osagas.

It was not until the fourth day that the Professor began to have some doubts and misgivings on the part of his own people.

He knew a battle had taken place somewhere, but he did not connect it with the conflict which John and Muro had witnessed. With a view of learning something of the tribe with which the warriors were engaged, he went to the miserable hut, almost in the center of the village where they had been taken on the first day.

There, cooped in a small place, were seven prisoners, two of them very small in comparison with the others, and both exceedingly filthy. The moment the Professor made his appearance one of them ran to him screaming, and crying out: "Professor—how did you come here?"

He was too much overpowered to answer for the moment. The other boy turned and burst into tears. "Oh, help us," was all he said. The cries of the boys brought the inhabitants to the hut. The guards made no opposition to the Professor's movements.

The chief appeared immediately, and as the Professor saw him approaching, put his arms about the boys, and led them out. Then walking up to the chief, with a terrible frown in his face, demanded why they had been treated in this man-

ner. It was a strong, bold play, but it accomplished the purpose, for when the Professor pointed to the filthy rags that covered the poor fellows an order from the chief was quick to bring them clothing.

The boys cowered when they saw the peremptory manner in which he approached the chief, and the boys could not help the tears from coming, at the joy of deliverance.

"Oh, tell us, Professor, why you are here? Have you seen any of the other boys? There are some others on the island, but we do not know where they are."

"I am a prisoner, as well as yourselves, and was taken only four days ago, but have no fear for your safety."

"But if you are a prisoner, why did you talk to the chief in that way?"

"He is under some obligations to me; but come along with me, and fix yourselves up;" and to the amazement of the boys he led them into the chief's house. The chief pointed to the boys and to the Professor as he spoke to the latter. The Professor nodded, and put his arms about the boys as before.

"How long have you been here?" he asked.

"Oh, a long time; more than six months. Some of the boys may still be free; but they are way east of here, a great many miles."

"How do you know they are east of this many miles?"

"Because there is where we were captured."

"Can you understand any of the language?"

"Yes; we can talk with them a little."

"I am glad to know that. Now I will see that you get water for taking a bath. How long is it since you have had a bath?"

"Not since we were made prisoners."

"Is there a river near here?"

"The river is at the foot of the hill to the east."

"Which direction does it flow?"

"To the southwest."

"Take this clothing with you, and let us go to the river."

"Will they let us go?"

"Never mind; follow me, and take everything for granted."

They passed out of the door, and through the crowd, and marched unmolested to the stream, which was not five hundred feet away. The savages followed, but the Professor waved them back in an imperious manner, and they halted without a protest.

"You act as though you were the chief. How did you happen to be the chief's guest?"

"I cured his daughter, and this is his grateful way of repaying me. But I have a secret to impart to you, and you must obey my injunctions. During our stay on the island I equipped a laboratory, and among other things made a synthetic food, which is put up in small tablets.

"I have eaten nothing that they know of since my arrival but these tablets, and it was such a marvelous thing that it has made my influence far greater than the power of their medicine men. When we return the chief will, no doubt, have a

meal ready for us. Do not be surprised if I do not eat. Act as though it was natural for me to live without eating."

"But are we going back again? Why can't we escape?"

"We don't want to escape, without their aid."

The boys were astounded at this statement.

Fig. 11. Soap Plant

"Not escape without their aid? Why do you want them to help us?"

"Some of your friends will be here before long, and when we escape we want to take the whole tribe with us," said the Professor, smiling.

The boys did not smile at this statement. They were quiet for a time.

"But take your bath, boys, and don't hurry it up." We have plenty of time."

"Gee, I wish we had some soap."

"Soap, why certainly; I think we can find plenty of it around here, and so saying the Professor began a search along the stream, and as his eyes lighted on a shrub with long dagger-shaped leaves, broke off a number of the branches which carried at the top of each stem a large cluster of reddish brown berries.

"We ate some of those on one occasion and were poisoned."

"They are poisonous, but not dangerously so."

"What do you do with them?"

"Simply mash them up; see how easily they saponify, and make suds."

"And here we have been all this time without knowing anything about them."

"Of course water is always necessary in using them," and the Professor laughed, as did the boys also, at the recollection that they had no water for bathing purposes for six months.

"Why it grows all over the island wherever we have been."

"Yes; it grows extensively in Florida, Cuba and Mexico, and it is found in many varieties throughout China and in India, in which latter country it is called The Pride of India. In China it is called the China Tree."

When the boys had bathed and clothed themselves they were transformed into new beings.

"Oh, tell us about the boys, and how you happened to come down here, and who are they?"

The Professor told them the names of the boys, and continued: "I want the boys themselves to tell you all about what they have been doing, and

where we live, and what a fine time we have had ever since we were shipwrecked."

The Professor's predictions were true. The chief had an elaborate meal prepared, and the boys and the Professor sat down with the chief. He remarked to the boys: "The meal looks most inviting, and it is a trial not to partake, but I can stand it a few days more."

The Professor showed the greatest deference to the chief, and at every proffer of food which the chief made to the boys he acknowledged it in the most courtly manner.

The finest woven and matted leaves were provided by the chief in a spacious hut adjoining the chief's home. Through the boys he began a conversation with the chief, and learned many interesting things, which will be detailed later. His first desire now was, in the quiet of their new home, to learn something of the rudiments of the language.

The boys knew most of the things commonly used by name, and some of the verbs, and these the Professor quickly acquired. He had a most wonderful memory, and could memorize pages without much effort, so that before morning he knew all that the boys had learned of the jargon, for it was but little else.

In the morning when he approached the chief, he greeted him in his own tongue, not with great fluency, it is true, but he used the little he did acquire to good advantage. The chief marveled at this, because heretofore he had not uttered a word to indicate that he understood the tongue, and the

chief could not for a moment comprehend that it was possible for him to learn the language in a night.

After this first interview, the boys were no less amazed at the memory displayed.

"From the talk I had with the chief it does not seem that the language contains more than two or three hundred words."

"But do we use any more in talking?"

"There are millions of our own people, fairly well educated, who have never used more than two hundred words in their whole lives. It is not the number of words, but the order of arrangement selected that is of value. Many noted authors have written whole books by the use of less than two thousand words. Under the circumstances, the hundred words you taught me were not much of a feat to memorize. As it was, I learned probably twenty words more that you did not have in your vocabulary."

The Professor was out with the boys every moment of the time, gathering information, and investigating the nature of the country around the villages. While on one of these excursions Jim plucked a branch from a thick stem, and said:

"There are many of these nuts in this part of the island, and we have often wondered if they were good to eat."

"By all means; you have eaten ice cream with these nuts in many times. Why, we had them on shipboard, if you remember."

"I don't recall it."

"This is the Pistachio nut. Go back to the stalk

where you broke off this stem and you will see the sap coming out. That is a resin or gum, and valuable in commerce. This nut is historical. It formed part of the present which Joseph's brethren took with them from Canaan to Egypt, and

Fig. 12. Pistachio.

in the latter country, even to this day, they are placed among the sweetmeats in all presents of courtesy."

"But are they eaten raw?"

"No; they are usually boiled with a small amount of salt, and sweetened afterwards."

"What is the salt put in for?"

"To destroy the acid in them; and that is done with most vegetables, and for the same reason."

CHAPTER XII

THE PURSUIT INTERCEPTED BY FIGHT BETWEEN TRIBES

The situation was a most exasperating one to John and the boys. They were actually prevented from ascertaining which of the tribes had the Professor, and their way to the south was blocked.

In desperation John suggested that come whatever might, they would ascertain where he was held, even though they had to enter the camps. Muro was consulted and John's determined attitude was sufficient to enlist his services and cooperation.

During the night the two carefully approached the scene of the battlefield, and secured the various headdresses of the slain and wounded, the object being to effect their entrance to the rival camps by means of the disguises.

The Berees were to their right, and not far from what appeared to be the West River. The Osagas were to the left, and encamped on a small stream which flowed into the West. Beyond the position of the latter stream, and less than three miles distant, was the elevation which John had pointed out as the destination of the team.

Morning came before the headdresses could be obtained, and it was therefore impossible to invade the Berees' camp that night.

Five days had now elapsed since Stut had been sent off on the mission to his people. There was

no news from him, nor did the Kurabus appear on the scene, and Muro began to wonder at this silence from his brother. He felt sure that some word should have reached them during the day, but in this all were disappointed.

Several attacks and counter charges were made during the day, but the positions of the parties were maintained, and night came on none too soon for John. Muro insisted that he and his companion should undertake the investigation alone, and Blakely insisted that John should comply with their request, as he felt that the same object would be accomplished without the risk that might be attended in case John should expose himself to capture.

He reluctantly consented, but insisted on accompanying them close up to the lines, and Blakely and Harry also went forward to assist. The Saboros waited until late in the night, and then made their way to the Berees' camp, followed by the whites.

At a safe distance John halted, and Muro and Nomo, rigged out as Berees, kept on, and shortly thereafter entered the camp, having made their way through the line without discovery. The Berees had no pickets along their western line, facing the river, as they did not expect an attack from that quarter.

They were gone for a full hour, and returned as silently as they went. There were no captives in camp. If any had been taken the probabilities were that they would have been guarded within the limits of the camp.

A wide detour was now made by Muro and Nomo, in order to gain the southern side of the Osagas. John and Blakely concluded it would be unwise to separate themselves from the wagon to accompany them around the camp, and remained on the north side.

Everything was quiet for fully an hour and a half, when they were startled by a gunshot. This could have come only from Muro and Nomo. John moved up closer, in order to get a better view of the situation, but the darkness prevented him from learning what it meant. There was great excitement in the camp, and the Berees became active at the noise of the gun.

Voices were heard at the right, as well as in the immediate front. It was evident that the Berees were concentrating and moving toward the Osagas.

It was an intense moment for the watchers, and they could do nothing to aid, as they had no idea what caused the continued uproar. It was obvious that Muro and Nomo had been discovered, and that the shot was in self-defense.

To prevent discovery John and his party moved back several hundred feet, nearer the wagon, and Muro immediately reappeared, with the news that Nomo had been captured. Muro's gun had been accidentally discharged, as they were leaving the camp, and the possession by them of the guns was the very thing which attracted the attention of the warriors to them.

Muro was sure, however, that there were no white captives among the Osagas, and this information added another mystery to the situation.

"My knowledge of Chief's attitude toward us is sufficient to justify us in going boldly into the camp of the Osagas. I do not believe he will harm us, and it may be the quickest way to solve the whole matter."

Blakely and the boys questioned the wisdom of such a course, but as John insisted on going himself, and his judgment had in the past proven correct, in all matters of this kind, his views prevailed.

"I will undertake this mission myself, and will give you some instruction to follow in certain emergencies. My mission must be to them during the daytime, so that as soon as possible in the morning I will enter their camp. I intend to carry with me a gun, and one of the pistols will be concealed. They will, without doubt, disarm me, and I shall have to depend on my ingenuity to keep the pistol for the purpose of warning you."

"If you hear the pistol shot, it will be the signal for you to attack; but do not attempt that under any circumstances, unless you get that warning from me. Each one must be provided with two of the guns, for this purpose, and the six of you can, no doubt, strike terror into them."

"There is one thing we must consider," said Blakely, "and that is the attitude, and probable action, on the part of the Berees."

"I was coming to that. The Osagas will know that the attack is on the part of my people, and the onslaught by you will be more of a mystery to the Berees than anything else. I am counting on the commotion caused by the firing, to effect my

escape, and I can do this, if at all, before the Berees have time to collect their wits, and determine on a course of action."

A hurried breakfast was prepared, and John made all his arrangements for the projected visit. Angel was in a tree, which was at the rear of the wagon, and as John was about to start, he came down and began the telltale chatter which betokened an alarm.

George was at his side the moment he reached the ground, and Angel again ascended and pointed to the north.

"Who are those coming in from the north?" cried out George, in excitement.

Muro saw the commotion, and sprang to the tree. "Kurabus," was all he said.

This startling announcement was received in astonishment. Had Stut's mission failed? It was now the sixth day of his departure. It is true that they might easily have trailed the route the wagon had made, but why should they openly and boldly march down into a country belonging to another tribe?

"Either this is debatable ground, and the Kurabus are at war with the two tribes in our front, or they are after us."

"What course would you advise?" asked Blakely.

"It is entirely out of the question for me to visit the Osagas now. I see no other remedy but to fight, and we might as well give them the lesson of their lives. This is the time to be the aggressors. I do not mean that we shall needlessly ex-

pose ourselves, but we must shoot to kill, and not hesitate in the slightest."

The boys knew what that meant, and it pleased them. The Kurabus came in sight so the tree was not needed to distinguish their movements. The wagon had been put in such a position that it was shielded from their foes on the south, but to the north it was exposed.

"Here, quick, boys, cut down branches of trees and put them up on the north side of the wagon to hide the light-colored top," was John's first order.

The nearest bushes were selected, and a fairly good imitation of a bush was prepared in haste, and they awaited the attack. To their surprise they saw several warriors in the lead, as scouts.

"They are getting very wise, in employing the scouting tactics, and this shows they are after some game, whether it is the other tribe's or some one else." John cautioned silence, and then continued:

"Their scouts will, of course, discover us before the main body comes up. We must not fire on the advance parties. Wait until they attempt a rush, so we can get enough of them in reach to make it count."

The advance warriors did not discover the presence of the wagon until within a hundred feet of it, and the scramble to the rear, and the falling and crawling tactics displayed in their eagerness to protect themselves and get away, was too amusing to prevent the boys from laughing.

When the scouts reported the presence of the

wagon in front, there was a hurried consultation, and instead of moving forwardly to the wagon, they circled around to the right, keeping away a sufficient distance to keep outside of the range of the guns. They had learned to respect them at the last meeting.

"What a magnificent surprise they will get if they go far enough in that direction," said John, with a broad smile.

"See, the Osagas and the Berees are at it again," and the movements of the two parties were plainly evident. Within fifteen minutes the battle began, and the noise of the conflict reached the ears of the Kurabus.

"The information we shall get within the next half hour will be sufficient to decide our course," murmured John, as he gazed at them.

"Do you think," responded Harry, "that they will join forces with either of the parties?"

"That is the point exactly. From the manner in which they are acting the Kurabus are after us and not either of the tribes before us. But see what they are doing? Why are they going back?"

They doubled back on their tracks and made a circling movement around the wagon to the right, and in that manner came up behind the Berees.

John quickly communicated his views to the party. "Now is our time to act. Take in the fort at once, and move to the east."

This looked like a hazardous thing to do, to the boys, but Muro saw the situation at once, and he assisted in the work, and it did not take ten minutes to set the wagon in motion, Blakely leading

the way, and John and Muro serving as a rear guard.

The singular thing about this whole proceeding was, that the Kurabus did not even send out scouts to watch the movements of the parties in the wagon. This was one of the reasons why John adopted this apparently rash movement.

Afterwards, when George questioned him as to the reason for taking that hazardous course, he replied: "In war you must never do that which the enemy thinks you are going to do. The more hazardous the movement, the more likely it is to succeed. The history of stratagems is full of such instances. This is the way I diagnosed the situation: The Kurabus marched to the position behind the Berees, either for the purpose of attacking or to assist.

"Now, it is perfectly obvious that in either event, we were at their mercy, as soon as the fight was over. If they assisted the Berees, they would doubtless win over the Osagas. If they attacked to assist the Osagas, they would also be the winners, beyond question, and in either event the two tribes which were successful would, according to their way of thinking, put us at their mercy."

"The theory then was, that the Kurabus would have considered our leaving a most hazardous thing to undertake, and that was just the risk you considered safest?" asked Blakely.

"That states the position exactly."

"As subsequent events showed, you were right."

Directing the course of the wagon down the slight incline, and veering to the left, Blakely

soon got the wagon behind the crest of the hill. Ralph came back to assist, and when John saw him he hurriedly whispered to him: "Run to the wagon and tell Harry that as soon as the wagon gets over the crest, to drive forwardly at all speed directly to the east."

"Have you any objective point to go to?"

"No, no, never mind that. Go to the east; we will know how to follow."

John and Muro remained on the crest of the hill for a full half hour before they began to retreat. During this time there was no attack by the Kurabus, and another puzzling thing was presented.

Muro did not know that any enmity existed between the tribes, although such might be the case since he had been away. But this half hour was a precious period, and the wagon was now at least two miles away. It is true they were now bound for the Kurabus' territory, and if the movement could be concealed until night, they might break through the line somewhere during the darkness, and thus get into touch with Muro's people.

The character of the country now grew rougher and rougher, and the wagon's movements slower and slower. In some places it was so cut up with ravines that they could not go a half mile an hour. In one respect this was an advantage, as the trails were more or less concealed at various places.

"I am sure they will trail us the moment the issue between the parties is decided," said John, "and we must, therefore, conceal our track by making a plain one."

Harry laughed at the contradictory nature of the suggestion.

"Certainly; I mean that, exactly. Did you ever hear the story of Robert Bruce in the Scottish wars, how he deceived his pursuers by reversing the shoes of his horse? The same thing was done by the noted highwayman, Dick Turpin."

"But the yaks haven't any shoes to turn around."

"Then we shall have to adopt another plan."

"Tell us what to do at once."

"Get a quantity of the ramie cloth; better still, take off the top and cut it up into eight pieces, and fold it so as to make a boot for the feet of the yaks."

"I have plenty of cord," exclaimed George.

"Now hold; don't be too fast. Some of you go ahead of the team, after it is turned around, and carefully obliterate the tracks made by the animals coming this way. Then drive the animals back along the path before we put on the boots, until we reach the place where we came into this little valley. You see we entered it at about right angles. We must put the boots on at the place where we entered the valley, or a few hundred feet beyond."

"But how can we hide the tracks made by the wheels?"

"I don't want to hide them. This will take some careful driving, Harry, as I want you to follow along in the exact tracks made by the wagon in coming this way. The animals' tracks will now plainly show that the wagon is going to the north."

The wagon was driven back carefully to the north, and beyond the point where they had entered the valley.

"Now, boys, put on the boots. This seems to be a good place to make the change, as the ground is firmer, and the grass grows closer and thicker. Leave one foot on each animal unshod."

"This is a new wrinkle, isn't it?" asked Tom, laughingly.

"I suppose it is," he answered, "but you will see the point in a moment. Now drive forward for a hundred feet or so. That is right. Take out all the traces of the wagon you can."

"But we can still see the prints of the unshod feet."

"That is good. Now put the boot on the foot of the other yak, so only one foot will show in the tracks."

"How far shall we drive with this one foot showing?"

"About fifty to a hundred feet. Are you getting out of the wheel tracks?"

"Yes. What shall we do now?"

"Put on the remaining boot."

"Oh, I see; you didn't want the tracks to disappear all at the same time?"

"That is the idea. You see, this is pretty firm ground. Now, Harry, can we turn the team around at right angles and go up over that steepest part?"

"I am afraid it will be a big pull."

"All right, then; there are plenty here to help the yaks over. This is a capital place to leave

the trail. I imagine they will follow it up along the valley, and not suspect that we have hauled the wagon across the hill."

The object of this maneuver was now fully comprehended. The most infinite pains were taken to eliminate all traces of the wagon, and Muro was on hand at every point, and was most expert in the art of concealing.

The proceeding amused him exceedingly, as was shown by the constant smile that manifested itself in a chuckle, to the delight of the boys. This was real fun, and surely the boys needed it; but with all that they could not keep their minds from the Professor, and the constant speculations as to his fate.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BEREES WARRIORS UNDER COMMAND OF THE PROFESSOR

"But you boys have not told me your names. I know yours is William, and you are James. Why, yes; I should not have forgotten James Redfield and William Rudel."

"But we are only Will and Jim, you know," and the Professor smiled at the earnestness of Will to be sure and give them the right designations.

Early that morning there was more or less commotion in the village and as Jim went out to investigate, several warriors appeared, but he was not able to get much information. They could be heard in the chief's house, and soon enough was learned to assure them that the warriors in the field were having a bitter fight.

This was on the sixth day after the Professor had been brought to the village. "Can you learn with whom they are fighting?" asked the Professor.

Will went out and mingled with the crowd that now gathered about the chief's quarters. On his return, he said: "It is a tribe to the east, called the Osagas."

This news stirred the Professor into activity. "The Osagas! We must take a hand in this," and he rushed out of the hut, and made his way to the chief. Calling him aside he stated that if he

was at war with the Osagas, he might be able to effect a reconciliation, as he had befriended one of their chiefs, and then inquired if he knew Uraso, the chief.

At the mention of that name the chief started, and looked at the Professor keenly, before replying. This is what he replied, in substance:

"Uraso was the chief of the Osagas, but he was captured by some white people like yourselves, and offered up as a sacrifice by them. A new chief, his brother, called Krami, was now at the head of the tribe. If Uraso were still chief we would not have this trouble. They took the two white men away from us, and when we took the boys they determined to be revenged, and we have now been fighting for six weeks."

"Did you take the boys from the Osagas?"

"No."

This information tallied exactly with the news given Uraso when he was their captive, as to the men, and also explained that another tribe had the boys. Things were beginning to clear up.

During the evening of the sixth day, the warriors began to come in rapidly, with news of their defeat. In the hurried conversations and animated snatches of information which the boys could gather, the names of the Kurabus figured most prominently, and this led the Professor to inquire the facts more particularly from the chief.

The Professor gave the chief this information:

"We were on our way to see you, when we found ourselves opposed to the Kurabus and the Saboros, who attacked us. We tried to inform them of

our peaceful intent, but they refused to listen to any proposals. We resisted them and during the night the two tribes attacked each other.

"We captured two of their wounded, and took them back with us to our home at the eastern end of the island, and on this trip brought them with us. We learned that one of them was the brother of the Saboro chief, whom we rescued from the Kurabus, nearly two weeks ago. The chief and another of his tribe are now with my friends, where your warriors captured me."

"Was Muro the chief?" he inquired.

"Yes."

"And he is my friend."

Without making explanations of any sort, the chief summoned his warriors, and stated to them that the Professor was their friend, and had beaten the Kurabus, and that the act of taking the Professor from his friends was a wrongful act. He commanded them to follow the Professor, and be guided by his directions. Preparations were now made for the departure.

The Professor now plainly exhibited his delight, which, had it been shown in the presence of his boys, would have made them view him with wonder. The evening meal was brought in, and the boys, as well as the Professor on this occasion, sat at the ring around which the food was spread, and the first act of the Professor was to partake sparingly of the different things offered.

This was extremely gratifying to the chief, who showed that he appreciated it. During the meal

the Professor said: "What do you know about the winds and the lightning and the thunder?"

The chief studied for a moment. "There is a great spirit that does those things. He is way up in that direction," pointing to the north.

"But is it a good spirit?" asked the Professor.

"We do not know whether he is good or bad. Sometimes he will be bad to us and sometimes good."

"Do you ever pray to him?"

"I do not understand what that means."

"Don't you ever ask him to help you?"

"That would not do any good. He is too big and too far away."

"Did the Great Spirit make you?"

The chief opened his eyes, with the suggestion of a smile, as he replied: "No; how could he make beings like us? He is a spirit, and spirits do not make men."

"Then how did you come on the island? Somebody must have made the first man."

"No; man always was, and always will be."

"But somebody must have made the first bow and arrow."

"Yes; man made that."

"If man made the first bow, then somebody must also have made man."

"No; I do not understand it that way. Man did not make the trees. They grow from seeds or roots, and if there had been no seeds or roots there would have been no trees. Bows do not grow, they are made."

Here was the savage philosophy.

"But if there is a great spirit, and you know that he makes the terrible winds and the lightnings and thunder, don't you think he would help you if you should ask him?"

He mused for a while, and then answered slowly: "It would do no good, because if the Kurabus should pray to him at the same time we are praying to him, how would we know which side he would fight for? Sometimes we win, and sometimes they win, and the Great Spirit acts the same to everybody all the time."

The boys could not help but smile at the character of this argument.

The Professor was not yet satisfied with the information as to his beliefs.

"Do not some of the tribes offer up sacrifices to the captives?"

"Yes; some do. But we do not believe in it."

"Do the other tribes here believe about the great spirit the same as you do?"

"Yes; about the same."

"Well, when they offer up sacrifices, what is that done for, or to whom are the sacrifices made?"

"Ah! there; you do not understand why, nor do we know. In each tribe are wise men, and they tell us that sometimes the Great Spirit asks for some sacrifice, and that when we have sickness it will make us well, and that we will be successful in battle, and we carry out the sayings of the wise men."

"Isn't that a kind of prayer to the Great Spirit?"

"Oh, no! In a prayer you only ask. In a sac-

rifice, you give. When you give something to a man it is different from asking him for something."

The above conversation is given, not in the exact language of the chief, because that would have been impossible, and it is therefore translated and arranged so as to make it more readable.

In the morning the warriors were lined up, and the brother of the chief, whom he called Ralsea, was in the immediate charge of them. The chief gave explicit instructions as to their behavior, and that the good will of the white chief would be of the greatest service to them and their people.

The chief on this occasion showed the wonderful power over his tribe. He was advanced in years, and unable to take active part in their struggles, but his address impressed all of them, and when he finished all held up the right hand, and bowed to the earth, and the boys seeing the Professor do likewise they also made a like obeisance, an act they had witnessed many times before.

In the meantime, what were John and his party doing? They left the deceptive trail, and crossing the ridge, hurried rapidly along the uneven ground toward the east. If it had been an open plain this attempt at concealment would not have availed them.

Traveling along in the narrow gulches and contracted valleys, which trended, in a general way, to the east, their movements were concealed, and at midday estimated that the distance from the battle-ground was fully eight miles.

Stopping only long enough to allow the cattle

to feed, and taking their luncheon in the meantime, the yaks were turned to the south, in the effort to reach the border line of the territory occupied by the Saboros.

They were now compelled to go across the ridges, instead of following along the more easy route with the streams. This made exceedingly slow going, but it was far safer, as Muro advised them, and night came all too soon for them.

The utmost vigilance was exercised during the night, as stray bands might be upon them at any moment. Once out of the Kurabus' territory, and they would be safe from attack.

"Isn't it singular," exclaimed Ralph, as they sat within the wagon that night, "what a small portion of the island is really inhabited by these people?"

"There is a very good reason for that," answered John. "The continual warfare among the tribes prevents the spread of the population. Another thing also tends to keep it down. The people have no ambition; nothing to work for. The only thing is the primal one of self-preservation."

"What a magnificent place this would be to promote," suggested Blakely.

"What, promote it with all the savages here?" and Tom laughed at the idea.

"Yes, indeed; they would be just the fellows to use in the promotion."

"What is there here to promote?" asked Ralph.

"What is there here? The finest wood in the world; and besides that the island is full of mineral, or I am much mistaken. But that isn't all.

This soil is as rich as any upon the Nile or the Amazon, and it is well watered. Why, this could be made a paradise."

"Do you mean to raise things?"

"Why, certainly. Almost everything which grows in the tropics could be cultivated here."

"But where would the natives come in?"

"To do the work, and in the doing of it, there would be a means to work out their own salvation."

"What would they want to work for, anyhow?" asked Tom.

John laughed at the question. I can understand your view-point. As it is, they have absolutely no need of work. They exist, and that is the whole philosophy of life with them."

"Then how can you change it?"

"By making them want something else."

"How can you do that?"

"Show them something they want, and you have started them on the right road."

"Well, as it now is, they want something and go out with their bows and arrows and spears, and try to take it."

"Quite true; they haven't learned the first principle in the white man's philosophy."

"What is it?"

"The law of least resistance."

"What does that mean?"

"Another way of expressing it is to say that we try to get things by the easiest and quickest methods. But there is another law which must also be instilled."

"And what is that?"

"That property is sacred; and it necessarily follows that to acquire what is mine, requires something from you in return."

"But I do not see how you are going to put any ideas of that kind in the minds of these devils."

"I will answer that in this way: You have brought with you a number of little mirrors, and various trinkets. The savages value things of that kind immensely. In their present condition, the plan on which they work, is to take them by force. Suppose I should say to them: 'Bring fifty pounds of ramie fiber, or twenty pounds of barley, or some game, and I will give you a mirror.' Such a proposal would show him the easiest route, unless he was too infernally lazy, to get the coveted article."

"But suppose he should say that he doesn't want to buy it, and purposes to take it in his own way?"

"Then he must be made to understand, by forcible means, that there is only one way to get it, and that is by barter."

On the following day the course did not improve; they were still on the ridge that separated the two rivers, one flowing to the north, and the other to the south. Before nine o'clock Muro came back with the intelligence that some band could be discerned directly ahead of them, and in the line of their travel.

To go southwest would bring them right into the heart of the Kurabus' territory, and southwesterly of their position would bring them within

range of the two hostile tribes. The band was still too far away to distinguish them. Muro hoped it was his own people, but this was not considered likely, since they had not sent any runners to inform Muro of the course they were taking.

Muro knew that this would be done in any event. Blakely asked: "May it not be possible that the messengers were sent in the direction of our wagon in the north?"

"I told him where we were going, and they would follow the wagon trail."

Stut would know how to do this, and it was therefore likely that the band in sight was either the Kurabus or the Osagas. A strong position was selected for the erection of the portable fort, and this was concealed as well as possible by shrubbery, so that unless they came too close in their march it would be unnoticed.

Muro was far in advance when they came up, but having discovered the identity of the tribe, hurried back with the startling intelligence that they were the Brabos.

"Well, they have gone through the Kurabus country. What does all this mean?"

"I infer that they are making a raid on account of the absence of the Kurabus to the southwest," answered John.

Fortunately, it was not a large party, but that was the more singular, and it was the perplexing part of the whole matter.

"It does not seem conceivable that less than two dozen of the Brabos should venture down here,

"'Do you think they will be able to read that?' asked Will"

[See p. 176]

unless they had some larger party somewhere near."

John conferred with Muro, and he seemed to be puzzled at the new situation.

"We must fight these fellows, if they discover us, and overwhelm them. They must be scattered to the wind. It is our only alternative. Get the guns and ammunition ready, and give them volley after volley if they attempt to attack us in any way." John was determined now.

Despite their efforts at concealment, the Brabos discovered the wagon, and without waiting for argument commenced the fight with bows and arrows.

"Now let them have it."

The first volley was a fearful one in its effect. They halted in the rush, and turned to the east.

"Out, boys, and after them; take the extra guns, and follow them up." With a shout the boys ran forward, ahead of Blakely and John, but Muro was, nevertheless, in the lead. Two who had been wounded at the fire, fell, and were soon overtaken.

"Don't go over a half mile," shouted John. It was useless to follow the fleet warriors. As they passed the fallen Brabos, both were found to be wounded in the legs, and to their surprise, begged to be taken to the wagon.

Muro spoke to them. John interpreted their appeal to mean that they were really at war with the Kurabus, and did not want to be left in the enemy's country in their disabled condition. This was the fact as Muro gathered it from the captives.

The four lying on the battle line were dead. Muro was told to inform the captives of their peaceful intention, and that they were on a trip through the island on a mission, and not to secure captives. They were further informed that friendship on their part would be advantageous to them, and providing them with food, and a

Fig. 13. Pineapple.

sheltered spot, the fort was replaced, and the wagon proceeded.

The boys had here the first opportunity to see the pineapple, which grew in patches along their path. The boys could not be restrained, and Angel was called into requisition. With his strong arms he broke off dozens of them, and the singular thing about it was he never made a mistake. His faculty for getting the ripe ones was unfailing.

"I didn't know these grew here," said Harry.

"Yes," answered John; "but only in certain sections, or in particular soils. It grows in semi-tropical countries, and is a native fruit in Mexico, Central America, Guiana and Brazil. It is claimed that the pineapple contains all the essential elements of every fruit."

"Did you ever see such leaves?"

"Many varieties have leaves over three feet long, and are valuable because the most beautiful silken fiber is found in them from which the finest fabrics are woven."

CHAPTER XIV

THE WAGON IN THE FIGHTING ZONE OF FOUR TRIBES

THE Professor had made a most careful examination of the population of the village, and an estimate of the total number of the Berees in the entire tribe. He found that their territory extended to the west and south as far as the ocean, and besides the village in which the chief lived, there were two or three others, smaller, and all contributed their quota to the warring force.

On the night before their departure, he questioned the chief as to the numbers in the different tribes, but of this he could only estimate the warriors.

"How many warriors have the Kurabus?"

"About two hundred."

"Do you know about the others?"

"The Brabos have one hundred and seventy-five; the Osagas one hundred and fifty; the Saboros the same number; the Tuolos two hundred and twenty-five; and the Illyas more than two hundred and fifty."

"So that you have about the same number as the Osagas and the Saboros?"

"Yes; about one hundred and fifty."

"How many women and children have you in all the villages?"

"About the same number as warriors."

"Are there any more tribes than you have mentioned?"

"No; but there are some wild people who are not members of any of the tribes, but they live near the mountains."

"What kind of people are the Illyas?"

"They are very mean, and are the enemies of all the others; and so are the Tuolos."

When the warriors were mustered the Professor found ninety strong, vigorous specimens, the picked ones of the tribe. It need not be added that the Professor unfolded a scheme whereby he hoped to stop all further wars, and to greatly enrich all of them, and it was fortunate that he found in the chief a willing listener to the proposal.

With this explanation it will be the more readily understood with what enthusiasm he placed his people at the disposal of this strange man. He explained the strength of the white man, and showed him how the arts of peace were cultivated, and of the friendship which existed between all the great people of the world.

It must not be thought that the chief refrained from asking a great many questions during the course of their conversation.

"Is the country you come from very large?"

"It is more than two thousand times larger than all of this country."

"I do not know how much that is. Is it more than two hundred times greater?"

"Yes, more than ten times that number."

The chief marveled at this statement.

"And how many people are there?"

"I could not tell you, but so many you could not count them."

"And do you have many tribes in your country?"

"No; we have only one tribe."

All this was conveyed and expressed, not in the order given, but by careful explanations, and by counting the numbers with pebbles, as they had no numbers beyond twenty which could be indicated by any words in their language.

When the warriors were ready for the start, the Professor was surprised to find that the chief had prepared a litter, to be carried by four of the warriors. This was to be his carriage of state. He did not refuse to accept his place in it, as he knew that it would have been in bad taste, and he was the more gratified when he learned from the boys that it was the chief's own litter.

The cavalcade marched directly to the north, the speed being about three miles per hour. What a glorious reunion he anticipated with his boys and friends, for he had no fear of their ability to cope with the various tribes, unless all combined, and this he knew would be very unlikely.

He had been careful to get from the chief an outline of the enmities and the feuds which existed, and the knowledge of this would the better enable him to deal with the different ones when brought into contact with them.

Ralsea, the sub-chief, was a powerful warrior, and the Professor found him a most agreeable man. In respect for his position, every order was

a request made through him, and it was soon perceived that the deference which the Professor extended, flattered him beyond measure.

Thus, by a diplomatic policy, he made a friend of the next most powerful personage in the tribe. He took him into his confidence, and explained his plans in the best manner possible, to the great satisfaction of the native.

Before the end of the day, an additional band of their own people came in from the north, with tidings of their defeat, and with them were a number of wounded. The Professor was at their side at once, and began the work of ministering to their wounds.

They learned of the action of the Kurabus, in attacking them in the rear, and joining with the Osagas to crush them. The Professor inquired if they had seen his own people, or had heard about them, and they replied that a wonderful people who had fought the Brabos and the Kurabus, were traveling eastwardly into the Kurabus country, and that the latter were now pursuing them.

Questioned whether the Saboros were also in league with them, the answer was, yes. It was thus probable that they had a force of fully two hundred to cope with, as it must be understood these tribes did not, except in the most urgent cases, put all their warriors in the field at one time.

This would certainly be dangerous in the extreme, and consulting with Ralsea, he made the plans for proceeding against the allied tribes.

There was no love between them and the Kurabus, but there had been peace for a long time between the Berees and the Osagas, until the new chief took Uraso's place.

The allied forces were between John's party and the Professor's warriors. The defeat administered by the combined forces would doubtless satisfy the Kurabus and Osagas that the Berees would not attack from that quarter.

The plan outlined by the Professor was this:

"The main fighting force of the Osagas is now in the north, and their villages are unprotected against such a force as they had. Our plan now is, to proceed as rapidly as possible to their villages, and capture them."

"Yes; and destroy them," answered Ralsea.

"By no means. We have more power with them, by preventing their destruction."

What manner of man was this, who would not destroy his enemies' homes if they were put in his power! This was a new thing to him.

"What would you gain by such a proceeding?"

"If we made his women and children and all his goods captive they would be powerless."

"But they would still be your enemies, and they would be the most bitter, and in order to crush you would unite with the Kurabus and others to wipe you out, would they not?"

"You speak truly."

"My plan would be to hold them from harm, and to show them that we do not desire revenge, and gain them as our lasting friends."

The point was gained, and the course was im-

mediately changed toward the country of the Osagas.

"Do you think it would be possible for any of your warriors to pass through the country to the northwest, and inform my people that we are on the way to assist them?"

Ralsea pondered for a time, and then said: "I have a brave man who can go anywhere that it is possible to go; but if he is captured it will be death; and I will order him to go."

"No; do not order him to go. I do not want to risk the lives of any of the men."

"But I will order him to go."

"Before doing so let me talk with him."

The warrior was sent for, and when he appeared, the Professor smiled. He recognized him, as the leader of the party which had captured him.

It did not require anyone to explain that this man was the ideal messenger, if his physique was any indication. He was the most speedy one in the tribe, and had never been outrun by any other on the island. He was the most handsome savage the Professor had seen.

To this man he explained the need of informing his friends of their intentions, and if attacked to maintain their position at all hazards. That he was well aware of the risk attending such a mission; that he did not wish to order him to go, but if he felt like undertaking the mission he would be rewarded whether he succeeded or failed, and if he succeeded it would be the means of making his people strong and powerful.

The youth, for he was still a very young man, could hardly comprehend the character of such an order. It was so unlike anything he had known in his tribe. "I will go," was all he said.

There was no paper or other material of like character available, and the boys were called in by the Professor. "Can you find me any plantain leaves?" he asked.

The boys were at a loss to know what the Professor meant.

"Have you noticed what the Berees use to thatch their huts with?"

"You mean the long and wide leaves?"

"Oh, yes; we saw plenty of them near here."

These were soon procured, long, fibrous, and strong. With a blunt instrument the Professor wrote the following message on the leaf:

"If you are attacked hold out to last extremity. I am coming to your assistance. The bearer, Sutoto, is our friend. Professor."

"Do you think they will be able to read that?" asked Will.

"In a few moments you will see the message much plainer, as the texture of the leaf is crushed where I have gone over it with this instrument, and the lines will discolor the leaf."

It was then folded up, and the Professor took a portion of his coat, and made it up into a thin, compact package, which the messenger concealed in his clothing. The boys watched him disappear with wonderful speed, directly to the north.

As this young man will be heard of frequently hereafter and take an important part in the his-

tory of the boys, it should be stated that he had wonderful energy and intelligence, and was the

Fig. 14. The Plantain.

favorite of the great Chief Suros, the head of the Berees.

"It is my opinion," said John, addressing Muro, "that the lesson we gave the Brabos to-day will

either make them our friends or the most bitter enemies."

Muro shook his head. "The Brabos are not good; they do not keep their word. They cheat and try to take everything away."

"The Kurabus are just the same, are they not?"

"No; the Kurabus are big fighters, but they do what they say."

"Do you know anything about the Osagas?"

"My wife Osaga; she was Osagas people. Osagas good, but like to fight."

"What do they fight about?"

"Kurabus want more land for hunting. Osagas got best land. Berees and Osagas have best land for hunting."

"In whose territory are the big forests to the west?"

"The Berees have the forest, and they have the big water, and the most trees with nuts and stalks like this," and he pointed to the wild barley.

"Are the Berees good people?"

"They good, strong fighters; old chief; wise man. All like him but Kurabus. I take Berees; let him go; Berees take me; Suros let me go."

"Who is Suros?"

"Big chief of Berees."

"Are all the fights about the land?"

"No; when one gets too much the other want it. If Saboros get captive, Kurabus want it; when Kurabus get three or four captive, Brabos want some of them."

"Do they kill the captives?"

"Yes; the Tuolos, and the Kurabus, and the Illyas."

"Who are the Illyas?"

"Mean men; we can reach them; close to. Big fighters, and nobody likes them."

"Are they near the mountain?" he asked, pointing to the east.

He nodded an assent. Here, at last, were the people that John had long tried to find out about.

The wagon was slowly going to the southeast, and near noon John discovered, what appeared to be indications of moving objects. The wagon was halted, and all took observations. Muro was the first to break the silence.

"Kurabus coming," he said.

"How do you know they are Kurabus?" asked Blakely.

"Too many for Osagas." It is obvious he had taken an inventory of both tribes on the day of the battle.

All looked to Muro. "Go this way fast," he answered, as he pointed to the east.

The yaks were driven up and the wagon directed toward all the depressed portions and valleys, so as to keep it in a concealed position as much as possible. A moving object like a wagon is much easier to distinguish than even a body of men, at a distance.

Before they had traveled a mile they were astounded to see another band of warriors directly ahead of them, and moving from the east. Muro suggested that they should call a halt, and determine who the newcomers could be, and also

to learn their destination and object, in going toward the Kurabus, who were advancing from the southwest.

"Are you able to make out who they are?" asked John.

"Maybe Saboro," and without another word he darted forward in the direction of the oncoming host.

This intelligence stimulated the boys, and they danced about in delight at the probability of this being true. Stut had probably reached the tribe at last.

They were doomed to disappointment, however, for when Muro returned with the intelligence that it was either the Brabos or the Illyas, but he knew they were not his people.

"What would the Brabos be doing in that direction?" asked John.

"Probably come from Kurabu village, and more Brabos up this way."

Properly translated this means, that the Brabos, during the absence of the Kurabus, had attacked the latter village, with one portion of their band, and that the other part had gone to the west to intercept the Kurabus from attacking in that direction.

"If you are correct, we are right in the center of the place where the three parties will meet," said John.

Muro nodded and continued: "May be Osagas coming."

"Would they come from that direction?"

Muro again replied affirmatively. The only

direction now open was to the north. "What shall we do?" asked Blakely.

"Fight!" was John's laconic reply.

An open place was selected, near a stream, and the fort erected within a few minutes after the halt was made.

CHAPTER XV

URASO CAPTURED BY THE BEREES. WELCOMED BY THE PROFESSOR

THE Professor and his party halted within the boundaries of the Osagas' territory. The next day the principal village would be reached. This was the day before the last incident recorded in the previous chapter.

When they approached the vicinity of the village, it was only too apparent that the warriors had gone, and it was but the work of a few minutes to surround it, to find the women, children and the aged and infirm, huddled together in the various huts, in consternation at what must be their fate.

They were gathered together, and the Professor addressed them through Ralsea: "We have not come here to make war on you, and you will be left here. We want to be your friends. Tell us where your warriors have gone."

An old man came forward and said: "You look like a white man who took our chief Uraso and killed him. We felt bitter, and agreed with the Kurabus to find you and be revenged. But the Saboros wanted to go, too, and that would be too many to take the white man's things, and before we knew it the Saboros and the Kurabus went to find you."

"Who told you that the white man had killed Uraso?"

"When the Kurabus and the Osagas had a fight in the north moons ago the white man took Uraso. The Osagas sent scouts all over the land, and found where the white man had his village, and could not see Uraso, and they knew he had been sacrificed. This was confirmed when, after the white man had captured one of the wounded Kurabus, and set him free, because the Kurabu said that he was not in the village."

"I am the man," said the Professor, "who took Uraso; we did not kill him, as we do not believe in killing captives. We cured him, and gave him a repa (a bolo), and he ran away from us."

The old man listened with astonishment as Ralsea translated the words. Then turning to the subchief, he asked whether the white man had many warriors. The Professor understood, and without waiting for Ralsea to interpret the question, answered:

"We have many, many times more people than you have in all this land, and we have wonderful reckas (weapons), but we want to be friends, and not enemies."

The old man then said that the warriors were now in the north, and that the last band had gone there the day before to try and capture the traveling murka (wagon) which the white men had.

This information was sufficiently startling to determine the Professor to act at once; so turning to Ralsea he spoke as follows:

"We must try and prevent the Osagas from

attacking my people. They will resist, and many of them will be killed. Let us go at once with the warriors."

This was the most remarkable event which had ever taken place in the lives of these people—it was the first time that a hostile tribe had ever taken a village and not exacted a tribute. It was too astonishing for their comprehension.

The Professor and his party had no idea that John and the boys had directed the course of the wagon eastwardly, and were, therefore, at that time in the Kurabu territory fully ten miles east of the point where he hoped to find them.

For the present the most important thing was to follow the Osagas, and halt them from attacking, so the column was hurried forward, directly to the north in the trail of the fighters in the hope that they might be overtaken before the next morning.

While this was going on John and the boys were preparing for the fight of their lives. They were determined on forcing their way through the hostile forces. The two bands were coming forward at a rapid rate, and they saw them unite without any hostile exhibitions.

The parties had joined for some purpose, which was not then apparent, as neither of the factions could have known of the presence of the wagon before them. There was no movement for fully an hour, due doubtless to consultations upon the subject at hand.

About two o'clock the combined column was set in motion, and it was noticed that the two tribes,

while marching toward them, along parallel lines, were separated from each other. John called Muro's attention to this. He replied:

"That is the custom here with all tribes. They will not mix up when on the march. Each tribe keeps by itself."

"Why is that?"

"The wise men say the arrows will not go straight."

Blakely, who heard this conversation, said: "I know just what he means by that. I got an inkling of that on one occasion. I put it in this way: They are mighty distrustful, and as a result are compelled to keep an eye on each other. This prevents them from shooting accurately, or with care."

This incident of the two tribes moving side by side conveyed another meaning, also, to Muro, for he continued, after Blakely concluded:

"The ones over there," pointing to the left, "are Illyas, I know."

This was determined, as he afterwards expressed it, because they are always suspicious, and were never known to mingle with the other tribes.

"But what are they doing in this section of the country?"

"That I do not understand. Maybe to recover captives, or something of that kind."

The two bands approached without any expectation of meeting the whites. That was evident. In any event it would have been impossible for the wagon to get away, because the country was too

open to shield them. They had only to hope that by some fortune they would not be revealed.

The wagon had been put in position, as stated, in the open, so that such a party, coming within a quarter of a mile, would be likely to catch sight of it. The hope of being undiscovered was very faint.

To their delight the party passed along fully that distance away, and did not show any alarm, but as the last of the column of the Illyas was passing from sight there was a commotion, and the entire column turned to face them.

This was the signal for the Kurabus, who filed to the left and danced about like demons at the sight of the wagon, and the peculiar enclosure at one side, which was immediately recognized by them.

The occupants of the fort showed no sign. "Keep cool, boys, and fire steadily, when we once commence. Have all the ammunition in ready reach, and merely fire and reload. Observe our former method. We must keep the reserve guns for an emergency."

The information was imparted to Muro and his companions, and each had a gun in hand and another by his side, loaded and ready for use. Both had been instructed daily in the manner of loading and of aiming, but they had done no firing, owing to the dangerous proximity of their enemies.

Muro and his friend were impatient beyond measure. They had the opportunity so long craved to attack their bitter enemies.

The Kurabus circled around the wagon to the left and the Illyas to the right. At a signal there was a shower of arrows, all of which fell short, but contrary to expectations, did not follow it with a concerted rush. Instead they advanced nearer, and the second volley of arrows was sent forth, and some of them found their marks in the fort, and two struck the wagon.

John saw Muro's appealing look. The latter pointed to the group of Illyas, and said: "Chief; see big man, this side."

John replied: "Can you hit him?"

Muro did not wait for a stronger invitation, and John drew back the firing hammer for him, and told him to take a careful aim, as he had been instructed. He did this with the utmost deliberation, in the coolest and most matter-of-fact way.

He fired. The chief threw up his hands and fell backward, while the warriors crowded about him and began to set up a demoniacal howl.

"Now, boys, that is a good target to fire into," muttered John. "Ready—fire!" Six shots more found their marks in the congested mass. How many fell it was impossible to say in the confusion produced by the volley.

"Reload, and be ready for the next."

The first impulse of the savages was to rush for shelter, and thus left their dead and wounded where they fell. But the chief's body was there, and several rushed forward and recovered him, without molestation on the part of John.

When the warriors fled they had an opportunity

to see the result of the volley. The six shots had wounded eight, more or less; how many of them were killed could not be determined at the time.

All the besiegers now withdrew to a safe distance. It was obvious to them that their arrows were not of sufficient range to compete with the wonderful weapons possessed by the whites. Several warriors crawled up to the nearest bunches of shrubbery, and they were permitted to do so, but when once in their supposed concealed positions were close enough, so that it was no trouble in reaching them with the guns.

The effect of Muro's shot was so exhilarating that he danced about the enclosure with expressions of joy. The boys patted him on the back, and applauded him for the masterly manner in which he had executed the first shot.

Two hours passed by, and it did not seem possible that they would attempt to rush the fort. Considering that there were fully two hundred warriors about them, such tactics, if pushed with vigor, must have resulted in the annihilation of the occupants of the fort. But the savages were wary. The Illyas had now a taste of the same medicine that the Kurabus had taken to their disgust.

Before evening the two forces disposed themselves around the fort, and the night set in with a slight shower. Muro chuckled at this, and when questioned, responded: "Cannot use bows," and he smiled.

The rain increased, and as there was now no cover for the wagon, all were drenched. The dark-

ness was intense, and the vigil was a constant one, occupying the attention of all. Muro stated that neither of the parties would attempt an attack in that condition, but they must be alert to resist any daredevils who might approach for the purpose of picking off one or more of their number.

Shortly after midnight a peculiar voice was heard, calling "John, John." They listened. "Did some one call me?" asked John.

"Yes; we heard it!" exclaimed several of the boys.

"John, John," the voice repeated, and they detected a scratching on the wall of the fort. John sprang over to the side from which the sound emanated, and saw a figure crouching close to the ground, alongside of the fort.

"I am John; what do you want?"

A hand was held up containing an object, and John caught it, and drew it in. It was something in fabric, and tied with a cord. The darkness was too intense to distinguish its character, but John cut the cord and a leaf fell out.

"Here is some news," he cried. "Get a light quickly." One of the matches was produced, and held close to the leaf. The writing could not be distinguished by the momentary gleam, which shot forth, but the signature, "Professor," caught the eye of Harry, who held the match.

"It is from the Professor," he exclaimed excitedly, and he jumped up and peered over the top wall, and seeing the object still there, reached down, and recognized a savage, who held up his

hand. Harry grasped it, and, calling to the others, said: "Help him in."

The savage made no resistance, but assisted the others to draw him in. Muro recognized him as one of the Berees, and quickly asked: "Why are you here?"

"I came from the great White Chief."

"Where is he?"

Message on part of a Plaintain leaf. Also showing its beautiful fibre.

Fig. 15.

"Coming from the south, with all my people."

When this was translated to them the boys were wild with the news.

"Be quiet, boys; make no demonstration. If it is not too wet, strike another light. There! steady!"

"What does it say?" was the eager question.

"If you are attacked hold out to last extremity. I am coming to your assistance. The bearer, Sutoto, is our friend."

Muro questioned him as John propounded the inquiries.

"Did your people capture the White Chief?"

"I took him in the hills to the west of this place."

"You captured him?"

"Yes; I took him to the chief, and he made the chief's daughter well. The chief told us he was a great man, and that he was forever his friend, and when our warriors came back from the fight he cured them, but he would not eat, and all our people marveled at this, and believed him to be a superior being, and the chief imprisoned all our medicine men."

"Where is he now?"

"Coming to us with all the warriors of my people, and with the two purees (boys) which we had."

"Purees? What does he mean?"

And Muro pointed to the boys.

"How did you get in to us?"

"I was with the people outside when it began to rain, and came up to the kramin (bush) close to you. I was here long time."

"George, get Sutoto something to eat; he must be hungry." And this was speedily attended to.

When the morning sun arose bright and beautiful it was a welcome relief to the misery of the night. The boys now had an opportunity to examine their new friend. They marveled at his youth. But he was evidently well known to Muro. They talked long and earnestly, and the latter recounted their experiences.

Chump told him about the wonders of the Cataract house, and of the remarkable things to be

seen there. He looked at the fort and examined the wagon, and the things possessed a remarkable fascination for him. He was a second edition of George in the capacity to ask questions.

Muro explained that Sutoto was the fleetest runner in the country, and his finely shaped limbs and admirable poise of his head was admired by all. He eyed Blakely for some time, and the latter held out his hand. Sutoto grasped it, and as they held each other's hand, said: "I think you ought to remember me. I was one of your guests for a little time." And he laughed, as did Sutoto.

The scene in that wagon for the next few hours was like a reunion of long-lost friends. The boys admired Sutoto's manly ways, and even Ralph, who often said he had no use for any of the devils, admitted that he would have to change his mind.

While all this drama was being enacted the Professor was hurrying to the north as fast as the warriors could travel. The Professor suggested that as they were now approaching the enemy's country it would be wise to send out advance guards.

This was a novel proceeding to Ralsea, but he readily assented, and four of the most skillful were given instructions to keep well ahead and note every movement. It was most fortunate that this was done for reasons we shall now see.

Before noon the scouts discovered a lurking savage, and as he was trying to get away a number of others were sent out, so their movements radi-

ated out like a fan, and in this manner the fugitive was hemmed in and finally captured.

He was brought in by the most wildly excited and gesticulating lot of savages the Professor had ever witnessed. This appeared to be a more than ordinary event with them, and he could not understand it.

Before they were near he heard the cries of "Osaga, Osaga," and the Professor was startled in the belief that they had come up with the band they were pursuing.

The captive was brought before the Professor, and the moment he looked at him cried out, "Uraso." For a moment he was too much affected to speak. Uraso went up to the Professor and embraced him, and then looked around at the Berees in astonishment.

Here was the Professor, carried by the Berees, not as a prisoner, but as an individual in state, with the warriors under his command. He could not understand the situation.

"Didn't we treat you right, Uraso?"

"I tried to go back to my people and bring them to you. The Illyas captured me, and now that they have allied themselves with the Kurabus, intended to attack and capture you."

"Have you been with them all this time?"

"No, when they first tried to capture me I was badly wounded, so that for a long time I could not walk, and when I was well enough, two moons ago, they did take me."

"Your people have gone to attack my people in the wagon."

"Osaga could not credit this. His brow darkened, and his anger was terrible to witness."

Ralsea assured him that such was the case, and then told him that they had just come from the Osaga village. At this information he grew indignant, and cast a reproachful glance at the Professor. The sub-chief quickly informed him of the Professor's acts, in refusing to permit anything to be disturbed at the village.

"He is a great chief," said Uraso, addressing Ralsea. "I saw the wonderful things he has at his village, and I want him to teach my people the things they do."

"You must go with us, Uraso; we must find your warriors before they attack John and the boys."

"John, John," and he repeated over the name again and again. His face lighted up.

"I will go; my people shall not injure you. We are your friends."

He was then informed that Muro, the chief of the Saboros, was also with John.

"Muro? My sister is his wife." This news made him dance with joy. He rushed up to the Professor and again embraced him, and then went to Ralsea and rubbed his nose against him, in token of friendship and peace between their people.

CHAPTER XVI

A PERPLEXING MIX-UP

Muro turned to John and Sutoto and quietly said: "They are preparing to attack us." Sutoto looked at the guns and John divined his meaning glance. Taking one of the guns he gave it to Muro and requested him to explain its use.

Like many of the natives he had heard of the wonderful weapons, but this was the first opportunity to see and handle one of them. John told him it was his gun, and a smile lit up his face. The method of loading it; the putting on of the cap; the manner in which the firing plug was drawn back, and the firing of the piece by the pulling of the trigger were soon grasped by him.

The sights were being explained, when John called Muro's attention to a moving object in the distance directly to the north. Sutoto noted the hand pointing in that direction, and casting a glance, instantly cried out: "Brabos!"

His keen eyesight saw what none of the others recognized. John turned to Muro: "I now see why he is such a remarkable messenger. A wonderfully keen sight, and a swift runner."

To this Muro nodded a quick assent. "Kurabus to the southwest; Illyas to the southeast, and Brabos to the north. Well, this is a fine combination on the chessboard," was Blakely's summing up of the situation.

"But are not the Brabos at war with the Kurabus?" asked Harry.

"No doubt they are; but I imagine they are after us at this particular time. Remember we attacked, or rather their party attacked us three days ago. They are sending us an answer," said John.

"If I am not mistaken there will be the most terrible mix-up this island has ever witnessed." And Blakely danced around as though he enjoyed the prospect. Evidently the besiegers had not noticed the approach of the new element from the north, for they were now preparing to renew the combat.

New positions were taken, and the constant communications between the two tribes were witnessed by the little party within the fort. At a signal the attacking parties advanced from all directions. John and Sutoto were on the south side; Harry and Tom on the north side in the wagon; Muro, Ralph and Chump on the east, and George and Blakely on the west side.

Thus eight guns were in the hands of the defenders, leaving twenty guns as reserves. As before, they approached close enough to discharge their arrows, and then began the grand rush.

"Take careful aim and fire," cried John. The volley came like a crash. They were stunned.

"Reload, and keep cool," came the second command. The party halted, and the indecision was long enough to gain time for the second shot, before they recovered and began the second concerted action.

"They are coming again; fire as rapidly as you

can and follow it up with one of the reserve guns."

The third shot came when they were within fifty feet of the wagon, and at this distance every shot counted.

"Let one reload and the other fire, and make every shot count."

John was in earnest now. One shot now followed the other, and the warriors could not understand it. Without an order they turned and fled beyond reach of the bullets.

The sight within the fort was now indescribable. Sutoto danced about, hugging his gun. He went up to the boys, and crawled into the wagon, and in every imaginable way expressed his delight. A boy with a new toy could not have shown greater pleasure. The boys enjoyed themselves watching him.

But it was a sad day for the Kurabus and the Illyas. The latter had suffered by far the most. But where were the Brabos by this time? They had heard the noise of the battle, and at the last volley were within a half mile of the scene and hurried forward rapidly.

The hosts beyond the wagon had not yet discovered their approach, and after the retreat the chiefs of the contending forces gathered in consultation. But soon there was an uproar. The Brabos had been detected, and a new movement was discerned. The latter saw the conflict, and readily learned who the participants were. They had before them their two bitterest tribes, and the whites were their enemies as well.

They made no movement, however, which

showed fear of their enemies, though greatly outnumbered. For a half hour they remained at a safe distance, and the other forces did not undertake to attack them.

Muro turned to John. "They are afraid to attack the Brabos while we are here." That explained the situation.

Suddenly the Brabos started to the east, and then turned to the south. The attacking parties saw the movement, and an intense commotion resulted. John mounted the wagon top to get a better view, and Muro followed him. What could be their object in thus getting to the south of their enemies?

"I told you we would have some strange moves on this chessboard," exclaimed Blakely, without taking his eyes off the Brabos. Then the next strange movement took place. The Illyas started in pursuit of them, leaving the Kurabus on guard.

"We might as well continue to take a hand in this," quickly answered John, as he turned to Muro, and spoke a few words.

The Kurabus were to the west, and at the command of John, the fort section on the east side was pushed aside nearest the wagon, and each with an extra gun sallied out, taking a direction toward the south of the Kurabus.

"Drive them to the west and separate them from their allies," was his command.

The sudden appearance of the besieged force disconcerted the Kurabus, who slowly at first fell back, but as the whites now rushed on, despite the overwhelming force in their front, they finally

others came rushing in with the announcement that the Saboros were now forming to charge them.

At this news the Professor ordered the warriors to move forward until they had reached the open. Then commanding the warriors to remain he marched forward alone and unarmed, to the amazement of those with him.

"Can we go with you?" pleaded the boys.

"Yes."

The Saboros looked on him with astonishment. With a shout one of the warriors rushed out from the ranks and across the intervening space and embraced the Professor.

It was Stut. He looked at the boys as he was about to treat them in the same way, and started back in surprise.

"Where are the boys?"

"Still in the wagon."

"Where is the wagon?"

"I do not know."

Then, looking at the Berees, he was amazed at the situation.

"Tell me," said the Professor, "why did you not come before?"

"The Kurabus captured me, and if it had not been for the Brabos I would have been killed. But do you know where Muro is?"

"I do not know. Three days ago they fought a battle with some one to the north, as we heard their guns, but we know nothing more since."

The Saboros came up. Many of them had met the Professor before—once in the battle in the

vicinity of West River, and once far to the east when they were allied with the Kurabus, at the time Stut was captured.

Stut told about the different ones, and what their stations were, and they crowded around this remarkable man about whom such wonderful tales had been told.

"Do you know who those people are that are fighting in the west?"

"We heard that the Illyas had gone to the west."

"Do you know what they went there for?"

"They were going there to attack the Berees and Osagas."

"Do you know why?"

"They claimed that the Osagas rescued their captives from them."

"Do you know who the captives were?"

"Yes; some of your people."

"Were your people coming here before you reached them?"

"Yes; that is why I met them so soon. I succeeded in getting away only three days ago, when the largest portion of the Brabos attacked and destroyed the Kurabus' village."

"Then they did not know Muro was with us?"

"No."

"Why did they start on the warpath?"

"They learned that the white men who had killed Uraso were in the west, and they supposed that if Uraso had been killed I would also be offered up as a sacrifice."

"But Uraso was not killed."

"Not killed? Where is he?"

"He and Ralsea are now up to the north, and watching the Illyas and the Kurabus."

"Are they fighting?"

"Yes; but whom we do not know."

"Then it must be the Brabos."

"But the Osagas have also gone to the north."

"How do you know that?"

"Because we came through their village, and have been following them."

Stut and the Saboros looked at each other.

"If that is the case, then the Osagas have joined the Brabos."

"No doubt, then, the force we saw to the west of us yesterday was the Osagas."

"Where are they now?" asked Stut.

"To the northwest, and we are following them."

This news that Osaga was safe produced a marked impression on the Saboros, because through family ties the heads of the two tribes were united, and these two peoples were always most friendly with each other.

"Did you know that Osaga was captured by the Illyas?" asked the Professor.

"No!" exclaimed Stut in astonishment.

He immediately imparted this news to his warriors, and the effect was such as to indicate that they held a most bitter resentment toward that tribe.

In the absence of Muro, Stut was the chief of the tribe, and this was gratifying news to the Professor. They must proceed to the north with their combined forces, and by uniting with the

Brabos and Osagas, crush two of the most villainous people.

One of the chief men under Stut immediately came forward, and said: "We would not have gone to the assistance of the Osagas in their fight against the white men, but we learned that the Tuolos and the Kurabus had also made a treaty, and intended to destroy them, as well as the Brabos, so that we wanted to get the white men first."

The Professor could hardly credit this startling piece of information.

"Do you think, then, that the Tuolos also are with the Kurabus and the Illyas?" asked the Professor earnestly.

"Yes."

A commotion was noticed among the Berees, and one of the runners sent in advance, toward what now appeared to be the Osagas, reported that the latter and Brabos had routed the two other forces, and were pursuing to the north.

"If that is the case, the Tuolos have not yet come up."

"We must go forward at once," exclaimed the Professor.

The combined forces set out on the march. Together they numbered two hundred and twenty men. There was the utmost good feeling between the two people, as was evident.

"Isn't this good!" cried Will. "What a sight it will be when we reach the Osagas!"

"I wish I knew where the boys were," responded Jim.

And the Professor echoed that sentiment.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE TERRIBLE FIGHT AND FINAL VICTORY

"I SUPPOSE we are in for it again," was John's terse comment, when he saw how the tide of battle had turned.

"We must go to the north," was Muro's answer.

And sorrowfully and sadly the march began. It was not a march; it was a hurried retreat. They had nothing to hope from the Brabos, and if the force to the south had staked their fortunes with the latter, it was evident that they would not interfere with the desire of that tribe.

John knew that the Brabos were the first tribe they had seen and engaged on the island. If they had known that the Osagas were the allies of that tribe, they would have halted and shown fight to the fleeing warriors.

The day had been a most trying one to the poor yaks. The roads were terrible to travel over, and they had been forced every step of the way. Jill, the smaller of the two animals, began to show the effect of the pace, and would not be urged along.

Angel, as usual, was in the trees, wherever they were near the line of travel. While thus going forward, he was seen to spring down from a tree, and began setting up the most violent chatter.

George knew what that meant. "What is it, Angel? Which way?"

He selected a tree, and Angel was up alongside and looked to the north. Far in the distance could be seen a large body of warriors coming down rapidly.

Muro and Sutoto sprang to the tree, but not before George cried out: "A big party is coming in from the north."

Sutoto looked at Muro, and then, addressing John, said:

"The Tuolos are coming."

This information was almost overwhelming. They were about to be crushed between three of the bitterest and most vindictive foes on the island. It could not be helped. They must now fight to the last extremity, as the Professor had said.

"Our situation here will depend, largely, on the actions of the warriors who are pursuing the Illyas and Kurabus. If they follow up vigorously, it will surely involve us." John's conclusions were acquiesced in by Muro.

"How far are we from the river?" asked John.

Sutoto answered: "Probably a half hour," which he indicated by the sun.

"Turn in that direction at once."

The boys now saw where their salvation lay; but Muro and Sutoto at once protested. Chump now spoke: "You do not know what a wonderful way they have to cross streams. These pieces (pointing to the fort sections) are used to float the wagon across."

"But what will they do with the curees (yaks)?"

"The curees pull them over."

There was no further protest. A half hour would not be long, and within ten minutes after they reached the river bank the floats could be ready, and from that vantage point they would be able to defy the island.

Muro kept his position in the wagon top and soon called out to John:

"They are driving the Kurabus toward the river. We had better stop."

"If that is the case the fort should be erected," answered John.

"By all means."

"Harry, drive the wagon up to the large tree at the elevation to the right; and get ready, boys, to unload and place the sections in position."

Within five minutes the wagon was turned around and one end abutted the tree. This was a small pine, with the branches not far from the ground, and the lower limbs could be easily reached by those in the wagon top.

The fort sections were installed within ten minutes thereafter, and the guns and ammunition arranged in the order agreed on. The victorious bands were having things their own way. The Illyas were next to the river, and the Kurabus were farther inland.

The pursuing Brabos were following direct after the Kurabus, and the other tribe, which had not yet been made out, were on the trail of the Illyas, and the latter were, therefore, moving directly toward the wagon.

John and Muro were up in the tree, watching the movements.

The former called down: "At the rate they are now coming forward, they will reach us in less than a half hour."

"What shall we do when they pass us?" asked Harry.

"We shall certainly give them a salute," was his response.

Muro called John's attention to an object not far to the northwest. Both watched it intently. There was no doubt a savage there coming up stealthily.

With an expression John did not understand, Muro glided down the tree and leaped over the end of the wagon, and sprang out into the brush.

John saw him go forward unhesitatingly to the place of concealment, and finally the object appeared, and rushed toward Muro.

He saw them embrace, and both came forward, and long before they came to the wagon, John recognized Uraso.

"Uraso is here," cried John, and the boys leaped up to the top of the fort, and each one tried to be the first to grasp him by the hand and welcome him.

He had never seen Blakely before, but nevertheless Blakely gave him a welcome, and when his eyes lighted on Sutoto, he could not wait to get over the barrier to extend a welcome to him.

"How did you happen to come here?"

"I escaped from the Illyas, and found the Professor at the head of the Berees, and he is below here following up the fighters."

"My people are helping the Brabos."

"Then they are the ones nearest the river?"

Uraso looked to the south, and his face lighted up as he said: "They are the Osagas," and he

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felt proud to know that his people were in the coalition against the two tribes.

John pointed to the north: "Do you see that tribe coming?"

"Yes; and they are the Tuolos."

"How did you know they were coming?"

"I found one of the Brabos that you wounded three days ago."

"Did he tell you where we were?"

"Yes; without him, I should have returned to the Professor last night."

"Where is the Professor now?"

"He is probably near the Brabos, or southeast of the position now occupied by the Osagas."

"Why did you leave the Professor?"

"I came with Ralsea to find the Osagas, but when we came up, found that the Kurabus were coming from the north and had joined the Illyas, so that my route to the Osagas was cut off."

"Why did the Professor try to follow the Osagas?"

"Because he was told at the Osaga village that they had gone to capture the wagon."

"Why should the Osagas be at enmity with us?"

"They understood I had been killed by the white men."

"Do you know where my people are?" asked Muro.

"They are with the Professor," and when Muro learned this he danced around in delight.

The boys manifested every evidence of joy at this good news. The Professor was not only safe, but with the Berees and Saboros, and coming forward as rapidly as possible. This was glorious, indeed.

The first indications the Professor had that they were near the contending forces was during

afternoon, when they passed over the scene of the battle ground the day before. Here were bows and arrows, articles of clothing, broken spears, and here and there articles of food scattered about in confusion.

This is where the Kurabus made the first stand. The Osagas were not in sight, and, indeed, the Brabos were not yet in evidence. Before six o'clock Ralsea came in and at once sought out the Professor. "I have good news for you," were his first words.

"Have you seen my people?" asked the Professor in excitement.

"No; but Uraso has gone to them."

"Where are they now?"

"Somewhere north of the Kurabus and Illyas."

"Then they must be in their line of retreat."

"Yes."

"Have you seen any signs of the Tuolos?"

"Yes, they are coming down direct to the position held by your people."

"Is there anything we can do to assist them?"

"That is why I came to tell you, while Uraso went to them."

"Can we go part of the way to-night?"

"Yes; I can lead the way."

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"Why are the Brabos at war with the Kurabus?"

"Because on their last raid against the Berees, and while their warriors were absent, they captured and destroyed one of their principal villages."

The Professor was further informed that at no time had the Brabos and the Saboros been at war with each other, and he thus learned sufficient to know that the meeting with the Brabos could be easily arranged so as to leave no resentment on their part.

This feature of the case was one which gave the Professor a great deal of concern. He desired to weld together the tribes in bonds of unity, and it was highly important that they should come up with the Osagas first, because, as the latter were allies, they could more forcibly impress on the Brabos the desirability of cementing a lasting peace.

Another thing of importance, which he had learned from the Chief Suros of the Berees, was the unstable character of the Brabos, and the more or less vindictiveness which was one of their traits.

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to reach the field of battle before the fight was decided, because, now that the wagon and its occupants were safe, as they had reason to believe, he was anxious to prevent the Osagas and Brabos from wreaking terrible vengeance on the two vanquished tribes. It would be a poor beginning for the work of pacification.

Camp had to be made again that day without reaching the Osagas. Runners were again sent out to try and find the most direct trail, and none of them returned before morning, and the two columns were under way as soon as it was light enough to see.

Soon the first runner came in with the stirring news that the Brabos were engaged with a party of Kurabus, which had tried to break through to the east, and by ten o'clock the Professor was startled by the sound of the guns at the fort.

The firing came from a direction which was almost due north, and turning to Ralsea, said: "I supposed they were way to the left of that position."

"No; the river makes quite a turn at the point where they are, and from the information we received from the wounded Brabo, the wagon must be somewhere near the bend, which projects out to the east."

"Then to reach the Osagas we must go still farther west?"

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This latter information interested John and Blakely, of course. All of them ached for an opportunity to go to the Illyas' country and effect their release.

"That is the first thing which will be done after this little affair here is settled," exclaimed John, with some energy.

"The Tuolos are close at hand," cried out George. The latter came down the tree in a hurry now.

"Where are the Kurabus?"

"Some of them are trying to break across the country to the east."

"Let us keep the same order we did four days ago."

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This intimate knowledge of the situation was brought about by the Tuolos' perfect system of scouting the country, and this ignorance on the part of the two fighting tribes could be excused only on the ground that they were making the fight of their lives, and had enough to do to keep out of the way of the advancing Brabos and Osagas.

As the Tuolos rushed to the wagon all the garrison were collected together at that side, and when they had come within less than a hundred and fifty feet, John ordered the first volley.

"Cease firing and reload," he ordered.

The shot at this distance was a frightful one to the attacking party; but they considered for a moment only, and then, slightly wavering, were again urged forward by the chief.

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